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DRAWINGS BY KAPP

THE NEW

STATESMAN AND NATION

The Week-end Review

Vol. XXI. No. 524 [Incorporating THE ATHENÆUM] SATURDAY, MARCH 8, 1941 [Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper] SIXPENCE

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THE FREEDOM OF THE ARTIST

THERE are few of the evils of Fascism about which we in this country have been more unanimous than its enslavement of the artist. Italy forfeited the last title to our respect when she banned so great a musician as Toscanini for his liberalism. Germany with brutal thoroughness turned all the arts into so many branches of Nazi propaganda, and we are the richer because such men as Fritz Busch, Gropius and Thomas Mann have been driven from German soil. None of us doubts that a civilisation will decay which fetters the imagination. If only those Germans may sing and paint and write poems who conform to Nazi orthodoxy, a great culture is dead and under our eyes a once civilised nation rattles back to barbarism.

We are still a free people and proud of our liberty. But we have had to witness this week an attack on the freedom of the artist which warns us that we must be vigilant. The B.B.C. has a great tradition in its keeping and in the past on the whole it has maintained it worthily. But its conduct towards Michael Redgrave and a dozen other musicians and actors who figure as broadcasters on its programmes calls for a protest that will not accept defeat. We have to thank the *News Chronicle* for publishing the facts. Michael Redgrave, whom we remember with particular gratitude for his acting in *Thunder Rock*, had given his name, as the others also did, to the organisers of the People's Convention as a supporter of their movement. Under the threat that a refusal would involve the loss of all future work for the B.B.C., he was ordered to write a letter withdrawing his support. He rightly refused to submit. We need hardly say that THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION has no sympathy with this Convention, but we maintain as stoutly that these artists have the right of every citizen in a free democracy to be the judges of their own political conduct. The sole concern of the B.B.C. should be to choose the best actors and musicians it can discover for its programmes: what opinions they may hold about politics or religion concern it not at all. But we should go further: we believe that artists are likely to be better artists, if they are whole men who possess a social conscience and feel themselves to be citizens. The intolerance of the present governors of the B.B.C. would begin by robbing the artist of self-respect and end by degrading him into a play-boy.

The gravity of this affair is that the B.B.C. is a disinterested national institution which sets a standard. It is in some respects a good and even a generous employer. But if it is permitted to dragoon its artists, its evil example will presently spread to the theatres and far beyond them. The ban that starts by penalising men inclined to communism or pacifism will presently be extended to every advanced or unorthodox opinion. No tyranny is so potent or insidious as an economic despotism. It was this weapon, much more than physical terrorism, that broke the manhood of Italy. At an early stage of the Dictatorship no singer could appear at La Scala unless he were a member of the Fascist Party: in the end even teachers in a village school were regimented. Anything so monstrous as that may seem in this island infinitely far away. That is too comfortable an optimism. We move very quietly in this country, from precedents to precedent. What the B.B.C. has done is to make an abominable precedent. We believe that Mr. Redgrave's fellow-artists are rallying to his defence. It should not be left to them alone. The freedom of the artist is an essential of our civilisation, and we should look to Mr. Churchill, himself a master in the art of history, to defend it with his usual sureness of instinct. But there is here an even simpler issue at stake of which the Labour Party is the natural guardian. The B.B.C. is an employer who is using his economic power to destroy the self-respect of men and women who must live by their work. This episode will end ill unless it leads to changes in the Board of Governors responsible for this act of oppression. Unless there is a public repudiation of this ban great harm will inevitably be done to the British cause in the United States and in every country where men have faith in the sincerity of our fight for freedom.

The Balkan Chessboard

The German army of occupation in Bulgaria is concentrating, as we expected, towards the western section of the Greek frontier, with the Struma and the Rupel gap as the main road that it will follow, when the moment arrives to attack. It is carefully avoiding any provocation to the Turks by ignoring the much easier route down the Maritsa valley. Hitler may even have some hope of lulling the Turks into acquiescence, for he has sent a message to their President by special courier, which was evidently of some importance. With an autographed portrait of the Führer went an assurance that the Turks are in no danger and a request that they will mediate between Italy and Greece. The reply, we are assured, will be a refusal. But what Mr. Eden and Sir John Dill achieved by their visit to Ankara is still a secret—not, we fear, a decision from the Turks to support the Greeks: they will fight only if attacked. There is, however, a hint that they may admit British forces to their territory. An even more impenetrable veil of secrecy hangs over Mr. Eden's visit to Athens. Last of all, the Jugoslavs have still to decide their final attitude. In the absence of Russian support we cannot look to Belgrade for any startling show of independence. What the Turks and even the Jugoslavs will eventually do may depend on the movements of General Wavell and Admiral Cunningham.

War Organisation and Post-War Reconstruction

Almost daily we are told about the Millennium that is to come—after the war. Nay, one of the members of the War Cabinet himself, and (according to him) a man, a boy and a lady, says that he is thinking hard about how to plan it. And numberless amateurs, dilettanti and even official and semi-official experts are helping him. But whilst they think and prepare paper plans (Mr. Greenwood knows this distressing experience from the time of the good old Ministry of Reconstruction) " the hard-faced men " from the Midlands quietly get on with their job, Mr. Bevin and the other Socialist leaders utter blood-curdling threats, but the monopoly interests (just as in America under the N.R.A.) are taking steps to safeguard their interests. We are to have planning—that is, the present so-called " controls," which are merely a glorified and reinforced form of the private monopolies run on a restrictive basis, are to be maintained. That they were largely responsible for some of our worst predicaments (merchant shipbuilding, cement, etc.) in expanding war-production is forgotten. Capitalist monopolies, carrying the big Trade Unions with them, are together likely to prejudice a really planned economy. What we shall get is a set of private monopolies fighting to win by State compulsion as big a share of the total real income for as little service as possible. As Mr. Balogh points out in a letter in our correspondence columns, the new plans for concentrating production, however admirable in themselves, have the same tendency in the absence of a reorganisation of industry financed and strictly controlled by the Government. There is no doubt that in the long run it will be the workers who pay the bill however much some of them get out of the scramble in the meanwhile. We certainly cannot go back to *laisser-faire*. But " controls " must not mean sectional egotism by and with State authority. And in this as in other respects we must not allow mistaken war-economies to prejudice both war and peace. By all means let us have planning. But, however impolite and indiscreet it might be thought, may we ask: " Who plans, with what and for whom? "

Mis-information

The number of Indians now in prison for impeding our war-effort exceeds three thousand. Lest this ugly spectacle should disturb the conscience of the British public, the Ministry of Information has undertaken a campaign of enlightenment. Its notes for the use of its speakers instruct them to

> say nothing about the intentions of His Majesty's Government beyond the general aim towards " Dominion Status." The difference is the pace of progress. His Majesty's Government does not want to strain the engine by accelerating the pace.

Nobody wants to strain the engine, but the car may be wrecked as easily by a misuse of the brakes. We note that nothing is now said about the intention which we had supposed His Majesty's Government entertained to facilitate the coming of Dominion Status immediately after the war. Indians are rightly contemptuous of undated promises which will be redeemed this year, next year, some time, never. Lord Halifax might be embarrassed if this vague and worthless version of our undertakings were broadcast to America, nor would Mr. Amery thank Mr. Duff Cooper for talking in this strain to Indians. The rest of this deplorable document may be described as an argument designed to prove that whatever is amiss in India is the fault not of the British Government but of the Indians themselves. Some phrases are deliberately offensive: thus we are told that " nepotism is a vice to us, a virtue to them " [i.e., the Indians]. It is of course true that some part of the causation of Indian poverty may be ascribed to Indian traditions, but this excuse comes with an ill-grace from a Power that has ruled autocratically for a century and a half. It is unpardonable, for example, to blame Indians, as this document does, for the scandalous percentage of illiteracy. There is only one explanation of that: we would not establish compulsory education. It is true, as the document states, that it is not easy to get teachers for the villages—for the simple reason that we pay them lower wages than Indian policemen. This compilation of half-truths and glaring omissions should be suppressed with apologies to the intelligence of this nation.

Economic Notes (*by an Industrial Correspondent*)

It is a curious situation that a Labour Member of Parliament should be moving to reduce the rate of Excess Profits Tax. Mr. Alfred Edwards, M.P. for East Middlesbrough, wants to lower the rate from 100 to 85 per cent. on the ground that the existing rate causes both waste and hardship, and that a reduction in it would lower costs and speed up production. It is, of course, a known and admitted fact that E.P.T. at 100 per cent. positively encourages extravagance. A firm which knows that it is safe to make more profit than it will be allowed to keep has no incentive to economy. It can keep, at the Government's expense, skilled men standing idle while they wait for work: it can, without damage to its wartime profits, conduct its operations less with an eye to wartime output than to post-war prospects of trade: it can also just slack, or at any rate fail to tighten up its controls in the national interest. If we are determined to leave the war industries to be run by private owners on a profit basis, E.P.T. at 100 per cent. is indefensible. But why did not Mr. Edwards, instead of tabling a motion for the reduction of the tax, propose that the State should take over the war industries (or at any rate the big firms in them) outright, and thus for the time being get rid of profits altogether? That would be an infinitely better solution of the main problem; and, if the big firms were taken over completely, there would then be much less objection to letting the smaller firms retain a small percentage of their excess profits.

* * *

Of course, the taking over of the big firms would involve compensating their shareholders with fixed incomes for the period of the war, in place of their profits. But it would have the great advantage that the State would be free to give really competent managers charge of factories now managed by less competent men, to group factories under co-ordinated management irrespective of capitalist ownerships, and to treat all the plants in an area making related products as constituents in a single concern: so that labour could be easily transferred from one unit to another, orders split up between plants so as to keep them all continuously busy, and to secure a much fuller utilisation of scarce machine tools, and real planning introduced into our war production as it is not to-day. Has nothing of this occurred to Mr. Edwards; or does he, Labour Member though he is, really believe that private capitalism is the best instrument for carrying on war production? Bevin has at last seen the need for making the dock workers at a number of the principal ports the direct employees of the State, on the basis of a guaranteed wage. Is not what is sauce for the goose sauce for the gander? If it is right to pool dock labour, why not pool capitalist munition works as well, and thus get, incidentally, an effective pool of engineering labour?

* * *

Skilled shipyard workers are at last being registered, in order to bring back into the industry some of the many thousands who left it during the long years of depression. It passed my comprehension why this step was not taken last summer, when the Government introduced compulsory registration of skilled engineers. There was already then an overwhelming case for registering the shipyard trades as well; but the Admiralty was quite extraordinarily slow in waking up to the necessity of a real speed-up in merchant shipbuilding, despite the high rate of sinkings which already prevailed. I feel strongly that it is bad policy to leave merchant shipbuilding in the hands of a department of the Admiralty. Supply has been separated from the War Office, and aircraft production from the Air Ministry, for cogent reasons. Why does merchant building still remain under Alexander, who, excellent man as he is, can have no time to give it proper attention? There may be a case (I am not sure) for leaving the Admiralty in charge of naval construction; but it is altogether anomalous that it, and not the Ministry of Shipping, should be in charge of the repair and replacement of merchant tonnage. I don't suggest handing it over to the present Minister of Shipping; but I should feel a great deal happier about the future of our supplies from overseas if Sir Arthur Salter were at the head of a reformed Ministry of shipping and Merchant Shipbuilding.

The New "Opposition" (*From a Parliamentary correspondent*)

To the surprise of the House, the Prime Minister made the passage of the MacDonald Bill a matter of confidence. He did this in spite of the decision of the Labour Party to allow a free vote in their own ranks. Hearty dislike of this measure might be described as universal, but the critics ranging from Col. Gretton to Aneurin Bevan contented themselves with speaking against it on Second Reading, because they were not prepared to oppose the Government on a vote of confidence.

The most significant event in the House for some time took place after questions on the same day, when the Prime Minister deliberately challenged the House to form an official Opposition. Shinwell had asked for time to discuss shipping. Under pressure the Prime Minister promised to give time for such a debate in secret. Winterton pointed out the difficulty in arranging debates of this kind through the "usual channels" now that all parties are in the Government. To this the Prime Minister replied: "If a sufficient body of gentlemen constituted themselves an Opposition they could be definitely recognised as such and we should know who and where they were." Anyone in intimate contact with members of all parties, will realise that it cannot be long before this challenge is met.

Many members of all parties are deeply disturbed over the failure of the Government to grapple effectively with some of the major problems arising out of our war effort. From this disquiet an official Opposition must emerge which has as its object the more effective prosecution of the war. From the point of view of both the House and the Country, it is important that such an opposition should emerge as quickly as possible. The House does not and cannot function effectively when the occupants of the Opposition Front Bench get up merely to set the seal of their approval upon the remarks of Government spokesmen. The country feels frustrated when it finds that criticisms which should be levelled at Government action or inaction remain as far as it is concerned unspoken in the House. Such criticisms may, in fact, have been made by back-benchers or by front-benchers, but unofficial critics too often go unreported both by the press and the B.B.C., both of which in their reports frequently distort the balance of argument in favour of the Government.

Members are beginning to realise that an official Opposition is vital to bring about greater efficiency in our war effort. Deep disquiet is widespread both in House and Country about Shipping and Food. Both problems are urgent. Both go to the very roots of our strategical position. Yet the Government has refused to give time for a food debate this side of Easter. If an official Opposition had been in existence both subjects would have been the subject of searching debate weeks ago to the manifest advantage of our national interest. The measures Bevin is taking at this late hour to register ex-shipyard workers would probably have been brought into being long ago. Another significant example of the lag in our war effort due to the lack of an official Opposition is the measures announced on Tuesday by Oliver Lyttelton for the pooling of industries and the concentration of production in the most efficient factories. Shinwell and others were pressing for such measures as a matter of urgency as long ago as last August and on other occasions since. Had the critics been organised into an effective Opposition this problem would have been tackled and thoroughly discussed last autumn, instead of being left to the last possible moment, when in the view of Attlee the matter is so urgent that action must be taken without discussion.

Who will be the front bench of such an official Opposition? Obviously Shinwell, Winterton, Herbert Williams, Aneurin Bevan, Clement Davies, Hore-Belisha and, of course, Lloyd George.

Hore-Belisha and Lloyd George have not been seen in the House since Christmas, Hore-Belisha because of indisposition, and Lloyd George probably because he feels the debates have not been of the importance to warrant his presence.

Shinwell's hold over the House has steadily grown since the autumn. Although he spoke in the lunch hour during the last Man-power debate, Members, particularly Conservatives, trooped back to listen and to support him. Through sheer merit he has made himself the real leader of the Opposition, and it is around him that any official Opposition must inevitably crystallise. This is due to his marked intellectual capacity, his ability to express himself fluently and incisively, and his obvious courage. That he takes his responsibility seriously is indicated as much by his constant attendances and cogent interventions at question time as by the careful guard he now places upon his tongue, where formerly he indulged in stinging sarcasms.

Winterton, too, has shown great courage, and a surprising capacity for ridding himself of preconceived ideas to which he was formerly devotedly attached. He also is listened to attentively by the House.

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WHY BULGARIA WENT OVER

BULGARIA has gone over, bag and baggage, to the Nazi New Order and for our own future guidance it is important that we should realise why she did it. She had her reasons, partly political, partly economic, and however painful the consequences of her choice may be to us and our friends, it is a mistake to treat her decision as a case of moral obliquity. We may hope and believe that for the second time in her history she has made a military miscalculation, but there is no ground for charges of "treachery": she owed us nothing, and still less was she under any obligation to the Greeks or the Turks. The first reason for her choice, which she made amid a sharp division of public opinion, lay in her weakness and isolation. Her army has no modern equipment nor were we able to give her direct help. She could not count on the solidarity of her neighbours, for the only bond that united them in a frail Entente was actually directed against her: this Balkan Understanding was, indeed, little more than a pact to maintain the *status quo* against her. There was only one direction in which Bulgaria might have looked hopefully for support. The Russians gave her a public warning before she had committed herself and they have now administered to her a most unusual public rebuke. That Moscow views with apprehension the approach of the German military machine to her own "zone of security" at the Straits and in the Black Sea is clear enough, How much she would have risked to forbid it is not so clear. Was her offer of a pact of mutual assistance to Bulgaria, which is said to have been vague, a real attempt to fend off a Nazi advance? Did it fail solely because the pro-German Staff of the Bulgarian army would have nothing to do with it? This chapter of recent history is for us obscure. But if Russia really wishes, even at some little risk, to limit the area of German aggression, has she yet managed to convey this clearly to the Turks? Their evident hesitation to contemplate anything more than the passive defence of their own territories seems to reflect the ambiguity, or shall we say the weakness, of their great neighbour's policy.

Noting the ambiguity of Stalin's policy we ask a further question. For the first time Soviet Russia stands on record as holding the view that Hitler is responsible for spreading the war. Possibly this is only propaganda for Communist consumption in the Balkans? May be, though the colleagues of Dimitrov in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia are thrown to the wolves in any case. On the face of it Stalin's criticism of Hitler would seem to provide an opening for British diplomacy. Is the Foreign Office taking the opening? It seems an odd moment for the Ministry of Economic Warfare to stress the difficulty about American cotton going through Russia to Germany, and the suggestion that Stalin prefers a German victory over Britain seems contrary to a realistic estimate of Soviet interests. Stalin's policy towards Bulgaria suggests to us fear of Germany, not willing acquiescence.

So far as we understand Bulgarian sentiment it is broadly Russophile: there is no enthusiasm for Germanty or for Nazi ways of thought save among the officers of the army and a small section of the wealthier middle class. The structure of Bulgarian society is equalitarian and democratic. There is no aristocracy: the peasants own their small holdings and the number of persons who could be described as "capitalists" is very small. But for many a year the politics of this unlucky little country had failed to reflect its social structure. The progressive Peasants' Party, under its murdered premier Stambulisky, had been crushed in a brutal massacre and the Communist movement, once widespread, had been destroyed in the same ruthless way. It is fairly certain that the minority in the Sobranye of one deputy in seven, which did dare to vote openly against adherence to the Axis, represented a much larger mass of the electorate. Bulgaria, as we read her decision, has not rallied happily or gladly to the Axis, and might not have done it at all, if Russian policy had been bolder. But she had, none the less, her positive reasons for acquiescence, if not for enthusiasm.

The first of these reasons is easily grasped, because it belongs to the familiar politics of the past. Bulgaria has suffered for sixty years under a sense of wrong, because a high proportion of her kinsmen lived under alien rule beyond her frontiers. Her ill-luck began at the Congress of Berlin, when Disraeli and Salisbury joined Bismarck in cutting down to about one third the territory which Russia had liberated from the Turks. Ill fortune pursued her: she won it again from the Turks thirty years later, with the Serbs and Greeks as her comrades in arms in the First Balkan War, only to lose it when she fell out with them in the Second Balkan War. Her chance came again in the Great War. Berlin and London both courted her and both

offered to redress the wrong she had suffered. As it happened, she miscalculated and joined the side destined to defeat. For this error of judgment the victorious allies exacted a heavy price, while they chose for reasons we have never managed to decipher to aggrandise Rumania excessively. Only the other day Hitler restored the Southern Dobruja to Bulgaria. A much bigger wrong still lives in the memory of nationalist Bulgarians. Macedonia, as far west as Monastir and Ochrida, is a predominantly Slav country. Its peasants talk a dialect appreciably nearer to Bulgarian than to Serbian; most of them had been won for the Bulgarian Church and educated in its schools, and they had struggled against Turkish misrule under the leadership of the Bulgarophil rebel "Internal Organisation." We do not ourselves wish to dwell on this nationalist quarrel. The two languages and the two cultures are closely related, while the two churches differ only in political allegiance. What these villages chiefly need is a good health service, roads, electricity, some industries, and a more civilised police. The Serbs could have won them easily had they been more conciliatory. None the less, it was hard for the Bulgarians to lose this big region peopled by their kinsmen, while lesser losses fell upon them on all their other frontiers. And because they chafed under these wrongs, their neighbours united against them and kept them impotent and isolated. On these resentments it was only too easy for the Nazis to play.

The other positive reason that governed Bulgaria's choice was the solider and more important of the two. She sells about 80 per cent. of her agricultural produce to the German market. Figures alone give no adequate measure of this factor in her life: this was necessarily a political deal, negotiated between the governments of Sofia and Berlin. Russia, however Panslavist the Bulgarian peasant might be in sentiment, did not need and could not buy his produce. As little did Bulgaria's neighbours need it, for they grow the same staple crops. Given the economic geography of Europe, it is the inevitable destiny of all the Danubian countries, Rumania, Hungary and Jugoslavia as well as Bulgaria, that they should produce primarily for the German market. With a port on the Aegean she might have had a slightly freer choice, but after Ottawa she could not enter our markets on equal terms. The breakdown of the world's free market after the slump of 1929 led to barter trading, which meant that she must directly exchange her wheat and tobacco for German manufactures. These tied transactions may have involved both servitude and exploitation. But at least they gave the Bulgarian farmer what all farmers desire, a sense of security. Others might have to plough in their growing crops or burn their surplus wheat in railway engines: his had its destination fixed in advance, This is the positive gain, as far as it goes, latent in the New Order. It is an escape from the old economic anarchy of *laisser-faire* and possible slumps. It offers some approach to economic security at the cost of political liberty.

The lesson for us in all this is fairly clear. We hope that the redrawing of frontiers will play only a very minor part in the settlement we give to Europe; but if we do it at all, let it be done objectively and not to satisfy our likes and dislikes. But the main test of our settlement will lie in its economic chapters. Here, if we think it out betimes, we have a great opportunity. The green belt of Eastern Europe, which includes Poland and Hungary as well as the Balkan States, will always be predominantly agricultural. Much could be done by planning under an International Authority, which could furnish capital at a low rate, to help the farmer through his co-operative organisations and to improve the means of transport. But we ought from the start to combat the central idea of the New Order, which is that the Master Race shall monopolise industry and more especially heavy industry, while the sub-human races till the soil. That means for such a country as Bulgaria, the prospect of ever-deepening poverty. The holdings are too small: the young men have no outlet. Agricultural prices and wages remain at the barest level of subsistence, because there are no industries to absorb the under-employed labour of a growing population. Part of the solution is, manifestly, to develop industries in these countries, at first for the processing of their raw products, and then with the aid of hydro-electric power, on a more ambitious plan. For an evolution of this kind regional federation is an irrelevant solution: a big advance could be made only by a planned economic organisation on a Continental scale. It should include the levelling up of education, and public health in the poorer countries with some help from the richer members. It should, indeed, adopt as its deliberate long-range objective the lifting of the standard of life of the primary producers up to that of the industrial populations. If the Genevan League could have done this, Bulgaria need not have gone over to the Nazis.

DOCKERS NOT CASUALS

IT has needed the sinking of thousands of tons of British shipping to recognise that one of our most vital national services cannot be conducted by a system of casual labour. A scheme to be introduced at Liverpool, Birkenhead and Salford docks this week (March 10th) and then to be extended to all parts without delay, revolutionises the basis of the docker's employment. It gives him a guaranteed week, with a guaranteed week's pay. The best guarantee he has had previously was a recent one; it was that if he was lucky enough to be accepted for a job he would have a guarantee of four hours' work. His new status carries with it not only the guarantee of eleven half-shifts of 7*s.* 6*d.* each, plus overtime, but the status and dignity of a regular time worker. The miserable and degrading system under which a docker queued on the quay side for every docking, hoping that an employer would pick him out for a half-shift, like a farmer buying a mare, abolished by agreement with the unions less than six years ago, can now be looked upon as history. It cannot return.

There is now, and it will increase, a clamour from the press, managements of shipping companies, and Cabinet Ministers, for a speedier unloading and loading of boats—a quicker turn-round. Loss of shipping tonnage, impossible to replace at the same speed that it is damaged or sunk, means that fewer ships have got to do more work.

Complaints have been made that the docker is not pulling his weight; that in some magical sort of way he should be able to unload a 6,000 ton cargo in a much shorter space of time than the three to four days it takes him now. Possibly he could. The docker is like any other human being who works for his bread. When he knew it might be days before another boat berthed, he would need no encouragement to keep a boat in hand, so that he did not work himself out of a job. That may be unforgivable, particularly in wartime, when every wasted hour at the ports means delay in getting vital supplies through. But what of the port employer who allows the docking to be suspended on a Saturday afternoon and Sunday while ships with precious cargo, food and raw materials, lie out in the shipping roads? Or, while ships are docked four deep in the pool, will not allow the docker to work overtime (although the men are anxious to do it), because that would involve the payment of overtime rates? Why should it be so cheerfully assumed that it is the worker who holds up production, when, often enough, through cupidity or mismanagement, the fault is justly with the employers?

The system of contracting for the unloading and loading of boats needs looking at. Most employers are agents, acting on "fixed price" or "cost plus" contracts. In the first type, a fixed sum for unloading a cargo is paid. If overtime is worked, the docker gets overtime rates, and that leaves a lesser margin of profit for the employer. The employer's solution is simple. He excludes overtime altogether; and if a boat is not unloaded by Saturday noon, it can wait until Monday morning to be completed. The turn-round to him is not important. On the "cost plus" type of contract the employer gets the full cost of docking, plus an agreed percentage, usually 10 per cent. The higher the costs the greater his profit. He wouldn't object to paying overtime rates if it wasn't for the fact that his next contract might be on a "fixed price" basis. The longer the job, the higher his profit. A quick turn-round is not a desirable thing so far as he's concerned.

One feature of the docks this last six months has been the high piles of merchandise left on the quayside and wharves. Dockers' traffic ways have been obstructed. Railway delays, and delayed boats, have contributed to that problem. Tons of goods for shipment have been moved time and time again to get at a particular shipment for a boat that has docked. Goods marked "priority" have had to be dug out of a pile of cargo, although it has been known that the priority goods have not been required for another three weeks. Tons of cargo have been waiting for a particular ship, while another ship has been docked waiting for a cargo. The new "permit" system introduced at Liverpool and Birkenhead, which enables the port authority to refuse to accept goods for shipment except to a time-table, has to a great extent eliminated the dumping of goods by a manufacturer at a port, and occupying valuable storage space while waiting for boats. Some of the dockers have got cynical, when they see things like this, about the urgency of the turn-round. They think that if the position was really desperate a waiting cargo would be loaded on the first boat available, providing of course that the boat was capable of carrying that cargo. But the opinion of the docker does not count. Shipping employers are notorious in that respect. Just before Christmas at one West Coast port, an emergency call came for dockers to unload

a boat and get an immediate turn-round. It necessitated working Christmas Day, and Boxing Day, through day and night without a break. For 48 hours squads of dockers slogged their guts out, and made a record for the port. The cargo was still on the quay a week later—and the boat still in dock. A group of dockers commented on it to the master stevedore. "What the hell are you grannying for?" was the response. "You got your b—— overtime, didn't you?" At another Lancashire port, dockers are still asking why a raw cotton cargo was turned away and directed to another port 200 miles away to unload. The cotton had to be brought back to Lancashire by rail; and there was a three-weeks' delay, while cotton operatives were being stood off for lack of raw material.

One thing that the guaranteed week will almost certainly abolish will be the haggling that wastes thousands of man-hours in a single week at British ports, fixing the rate to be paid for unloading specific cargoes. Although the rate for handling cargo is fixed at 7*s.* 6*d.* a half-shift (7*s.* in smaller ports), the kind of cargo, its condition, and the general state of the boat itself, all have a part in varying the rate. Fifty men will sit down for an hour while their representative reaches agreement with the employer as to whether they should be paid 3*d.* or 4*d.* an hour more for handling, say, damaged barrels of tallow: that would be "dirty money": if it was a cargo of cement an extra 3*d.* would be needed as "dust money." "Danger money," usually 6*d.* an hour, is claimed for handling explosives, and work on a holed ship would need additional recompense. Employers could have solved that particular problem a long time ago had it not been for the tradition that dockers were "casuals." There is something to be said for extra pay for a man handling a cargo as filthy and penetrative as lamp black, or pyrites. Fats, and oils, and grease, do not increase the value of the docker's clothing. The railwaymen, the Corporation worker, and busmen all have clothing provided. (True, its value is taken into account when fixing wage rates, but that is not the point.)

It is to be expected that the guaranteed week will carry with it some measure of employers' co-operation in ports, in order to provide canteens for dock workers; and would it be too much to expect baths to be provided for dockers who often do dirtier work than miners? Would that be pampering the docker too much? Going home with hair full of grain dust from a cargo of wheat or Plate corn, with nostrils and eyes smarting with flour, in clothes that reek of pitch, or oil, and muck, is not pleasant. The issue of corduroys, tough boots, and dungarees, initialled, maybe, with the name of the port authority, would be an additional gesture on the part of the employers which would probably minimise the difficulty and wastage caused by negotiating special rates for almost every boat.

The arrangement of a guaranteed week based on eleven half-shifts a week at 7*s.* 6*d.* will give a minimum guarantee of 82*s.* 6*d.* a week—a guarantee that the docker has never had before. A Sunday shift by rota will give him an additional 15*s.* a week every three weeks or so, and overtime, worked at overtime rates, will be additional. That means the docker is lifted out of casual labour and put on a regular payroll of something not likely to be less than £4 10*s.* a week. It was the Minister of Labour who had to step in to regularise the work. If the docker is to be maintained as a regular time worker employed by a port authority after the war, it means that port authorities, and shipping agents as well as shipping lines, should come under one control right away. Despite the Chamber of Shipping's fear that Government ownership is only a step towards totalitarianism it is a step to which neither the docker nor the seaman would raise the slightest objection.

A. HARDY

A LONDON DIARY

WHO is responsible for these wrecking activities at the B.B.C.? Well-known broadcasters point to the difference between the freedom of England and the persecution of individuals for their political opinions in Fascist countries, and then actors, singers and band leaders are threatened with deprivation of their livelihood if they do not renounce their political opinions. What a good advertisement for democracy abroad! How encouraging to B.B.C. listeners! How good for morale! I cannot believe that Mr. Ogilvie, who is a reasonable and tolerant Director, initiates or believes in such policies. Mr. Duff Cooper defended the ban on Sir Hugh Roberton the other day; did he do so from his heart? As for the Governors of the B.B.C., they are defended by a nominal independence which prevents questions being asked in the House of Commons. But I see that a motion has been put down in the House, and I think there will be an agitation for the appointment of new Governors, or for the restoration of knowledgeable people like Miss Fry and Dr. Mallon who were pushed off the Board of Governors when the war began. Well-known broadcasters to whom I have spoken in the last few days are unanimously indignant, and I am glad to see that Leslie Howard and other actors, the Musicians Union and Equity are already taking the matter up. The National Council of Civil Liberties has called a meeting at the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, for March 17th at 6 o'clock. I doubt if the authorities behind the ban, whoever they are, will succeed in getting away with it this time.

* * *

After reading about this dangerous nonsense, I was unfortunate enough to open the 1941 B.B.C. Handbook (published by the B.B.C. at 2*s.*) at a full-page photograph of Sir Allan Powell, the Chairman of the Board of Governors. No doubt he is far more intelligent than this photograph suggests. (He has been not only Mayor of Kensington, but Clerk to the Metropolitan Asylums Board.) The rest of the book is full of interest. Sir Adrian Boult's article on music is annoyingly complacent. It may be as necessary to ration good music as it is to ration butter. But at least Lord Woolton does not maintain that the amount of butter we get is "impressive." I was specially interested in Harold Nicolson's article on propaganda, in which he urbanely disclaims the notion that the Ministry of Information wishes to emulate Dr. Göbbels's factory:

> If the Ministry of Information were to become a beloved feature of our political life, then I should indeed feel that something had gone very wrong with the mental and spiritual health of my countrymen. . . . We are convinced that totalitarian methods of propaganda are not only foolish as such, but wholly inapplicable to a civilised community.

The success of the Ministry has been far greater abroad than at home, and the article by Mr. Salt, Director of the European Service, is full of encouraging facts. He does not mention that at the beginning of the war, thanks to several Prime Ministers and Chancellors of the Exchequer, we were as badly off for transmitters as we were for aeroplanes and guns. Moreover, our enemies have since acquired control of most of the wireless stations in Europe. The B.B.C., however, is now broadcasting daily in thirty languages, and effectively penetrating a continuous barrage of enemy lies. There is only a short reference in the Handbook to one of the most valuable war activities of the B.B.C., the "Monitoring Service," which produces a daily summary of broadcasts from foreign countries in thirty languages; and Mr. Silvey's article on the statistics of listening is all too short. It is estimated that there are 1,230,000 for Evening Prayer, 2,650,000 for the Wednesday Symphony Concerts and 10,700,000 for Saturday Night Variety. Mr. Churchill's audience, larger still, is gauged as 64 per cent. of the adult population.

* * *

The story of Alfonso of Spain follows the familiar pattern of kings who begin by trying to assert their divine right against the democratic current, fail to satisfy anyone and plunge their countries into civil war. He was only sixteen years old in 1902 when he took the oath to observe the Constitution, but he surprised his Ministers by presiding over his first Cabinet in military uniform. He refused economies suggested by his Minister of War and insisted on a policy of increased military expenditure, at a time when there seemed no justification except the pressure of the army itself. He attempted to make his absolutist ambitions palatable by an attitude of general *bonhomie*; a delicate child, he grew up a vigorous sportsman who sought popularity with everyone—even when he insisted on appointing his own nominee as Chief of Staff and forced Maura, his Prime Minister, to resign. He took the army under his special protection, relying on the loyalty of the officers and the Church to counteract his increasing unpopularity with the democratic side of Spain. He dismissed critics and appointed favourites—always with a slap on the back and a shake of the hand for everyone. Barbers, waiters, restaurant proprietors and cocktail barmen were all among his personal friends. He had a smile and a good word for the peasant and the worker—but in army and aristocratic circles he referred to all workers as the *canalla*. There were eight attempts on his life—the first on the day of his marriage with the English Princess Victoria Eugenie of Battenburg. His courage on these occasions increased his reputation.

* * *

From 1914 to 1918, Alfonso maintained a discreet neutrality, and it was not easy for him to do so: the reactionaries and army officers were pro-German, while the liberal-democrats and the people sympathised with the Allies. Spain's neutrality in that war brought her much wealth. Not for centuries was there such prosperity. Bad government continued, and grew even worse than it had been. The Moroccan war was a heavy drain on the blood and treasure of

Spain, and the ineptitude of military leaders was not cured by Alfonso's interference in their affairs, which, in fact, directly contributed to one of the most tragic and humiliating disasters in Spanish history. Parliament clamoured for an investigation of responsibility for it, and the king, fearing the possible disclosures, encouraged and fostered the *coup d'état* which made General Primo de Rivera Dictator. Alfonso broke his oath to the Constitution, and when General Primo's dictatorship petered out amidst the worst scandals of graft and racketeering in Spanish history, with many of which the king's name was associated, Primo de Rivera was thrown aside. That was the beginning of the end of the monarchy. The politicians were already hostile and republican; the army was disgusted and republican or neutral; the Spanish people, except in some country districts and in Navarre, were republican and in a revolutionary mood. Alfonso feared a General Election, and municipal elections were held instead. The results from the principal cities showed a heavy anti-monarchist poll. Alfonso had one more card to play: the Civil Guard. Even that failed, for its Commander, the very pro-monarchist General Sanjurjo, refused to stand by the king, who left Spain with hardly a friend to say a good word, and not one prepared to lift a finger, on his behalf.

* * *

Is the population spending less on food than before the war? On first thoughts this is a ridiculous question in view of the rise in prices. But I participated in an animated male discussion which revolved around the argument that although people would like to spend as much and more they are unable to do so. Only 1*s.* 2*d.* per head can be spent on meat; butter, sugar, margarine, fats, bacon and tea are rationed at pegged prices; cheese is unobtainable and fruit often so. We had just got to the stage of persuading ourselves that there must be a surplus on the household allowance which could be justifiably held back by the breadwinner and spent on extra cigarettes in lieu of the food, when the ladies intervened to blow the argument sky-high. Did we think that the reduced expenditure on meat stopped at that point? Did we realise that other meals had to be filled in with cod at 2*s.* 6*d.* a lb. and that the scattered buying of other forms of protein was much more expensive than the pre-war cost of the large joint which often stretched over until Thursday? Did we realise what the rise in the price of milk and eggs meant to the budget? Did we know that apples at 8*d.* a lb. instead of 2*d.* offset the forced economy on oranges, lemons and bananas? Did we know the price of tinned fruit and did we delude ourselves that we were filling in all the hollows with cheap bread? Our vision of extra tobacco vanished under this assault, but some of us were still suspicious. What are the facts? I cannot believe that working-class households are saving on food, but are middle-class housewives being forced to do so by sheer lack of outlets for the money?

* * *

I see that some mysterious and ill-informed references to the 1941 Committee have been made in the press. Why the *Evening Standard* should go so fantastically wrong I do not quite know. Michael Foot was one of the original members of this Committee and nothing could be easier than for the *Evening Standard* to get the facts. The press should know that the Committee is not a Priestley Committee and was not started by Priestley; there are about forty members and Priestley has been temporarily selected as chairman. Nor is there any truth in the idea that the Committee is trying to start a new parliamentary party. Nor that it consists in a body of armchair critics. I should say that the principal bond of unity amongst the members is a realisation that the world is not divided into two parts, a war which we have to win followed by reconstruction afterwards, but that the shape of things to come is being determined now.

* * *

One backer only named the winning combination of the tote daily double—Alacrity and Santick at Plumpton, receiving £516 3*s.* for a ten-shilling stake. This was front page news in last Sunday's papers and millions of English hearts beat the faster for it. Thousands of lips murmured the names until the speakers were firmly convinced that they would have selected them if they had been at Plumpton. Lord Haw-haw can talk his present stuff until he is blue in the face, but if he gave three winners in succession people would switch off the Prime Minister to listen to him.

* * *

Among the Army educational schemes about to be introduced is an essay competition open to all ranks; there will be a prize of £25 for the best essay. One of the subjects is the dictum of Voltaire, "I detest what you say, but I would defend to the death your right to say it." If there are any uninformed admirers of Michael Redgrave or Beatrix Lehmann they will have a chance to spread themselves. I wonder if Cabinet Ministers could do "not less than 1,000 words and not more than 3,000" on this particular subject. Lord Simon, I know, could draft a neat opinion making this principle the basis for the suspension of *Habeas Corpus*.

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of this column goes this week to "Air Raid Distress Fund."

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

There are now scores of generations of British dachshunds behind Vonny, and in her own comely person she demonstrates the hopeful fact that in the free air of England, untouched by taint of Nazidom, even German origin is no bar to the choicest sort of development of typically lovable English quality. As with so many of our indigenous canine breeds, war has sharpened Vonny's always keen wits and senses, as it has heightened her hatred of all Boche.—*Ideal Home.*

The Chairman of the Finance Committee, who recommended Leach's dismissal, said there were no conscientious objectors allowed in the Old Testament, and they should not be allowed in these days.—*Daily Herald.*

At the Home Circle of Sir John Anderson, at Bath, as we have already reported, Mr. W. E. Gladstone, former Prime Minister of England, is a frequent communicator. . . . A letter from Edgar Tozer in Melbourne, tells me that Gladstone is quite a regular visitor to his circle and the messages delivered are almost a reproduction of those given simultaneously at Sir John Anderson's circle. Gladstone insists he cannot predict the duration of the war, but he definitely says "that the British Flag is up and will not come down until the peace which England and the world wants is an actuality." At the Melbourne circle, Foch and Kitchener are also visitors.—*The Two Worlds.*

"It can confidently be stated," Brig.-General Lord Croft says in a foreword, "that no single territory of the Empire fell to us as a result of premeditated aggression."—*Observer.*

A B.B.C. announcer will stand on his head reading a news bulletin in the Home Service Programme on March 8 and on March 10 for the Forces. This is part of the puzzle corner prize competition, and listeners will be asked to guess which of three announcers he is.—*Sunday Express.*

FILIBUSTER

Administration leaders now accuse isolationists of being engaged in a "filibuster." . . . A "filibuster" is generally regarded as beginning when senators read from an encyclopaedia.—*Manchester Guardian*, March 4th.

By the shore of the Potomac
Sit the prophets of the nation,
Like the rocks with mosses on them,
Holding up the Lend and Lease Bill,
Aid for Greece and aid for Britain.
Isolation's filibusters
Holding up the swift destroyers,
Holding up the long-range bombers.
Very old is filibustering,
Very old and democratic,
Very full of repetition.
Ninety days, or maybe sixty,
See Democracy in death-throes,
While the prophets of the nation
Cry they hear the war-drums beating,
While the Axis marches eastward,
While the Axis marches southward,
While the dwindling British convoys
Founder in the wide Atlantic.
Still the Senators hold pow-wow,
Sixty days or maybe ninety,
Hearing Nye of North Dakota,
Hearing Wheeler of Montana,
And la Follette of Wisconsin
Calling up the shade of Borah,
Late of Idaho, at present
In eternal isolation
In the Land of the Hereafter.
When, to kill the Lend and Lease Bill,
When they wander off the subject,
Reading from the Book of Numbers,
Reading the Encyclopaedia
Clear from ANNO through to ZYGO
Then it is they filibuster,
Keeping up the old tradition,
Crabbing the Administration,
By the shore of the Potomac.

SAGITTARIUS

SHELTERS

NOBODY is quite happy *about* the shelters; lots of people are quite happy *in* them. That is the measure of the progress which has been made, since, under the Blitz of September, the public was shocked by the appalling shelter conditions. But people from the other type of "sheltered classes" (i.e. the classes who have been sheltered from the realities) may still be fastidiously shocked if they see inside one of the big communal shelters. Indeed, one of the new diversions one wants to discourage is the "slumming" habits of humanitarians who are appropriately revolted by seeing humanity in the mass.

One does not pretend that conditions are entirely satisfactory, far from it, but those of us who were familiar—physically sickened—with the cesspool conditions of September can testify to the immense advances which have been made. The good shelters have been improved; the worst shelters have been transformed; even the mid-way ones, which were never good or bad, have made some progress, but, of course, in a less spectacular way. Those which still give me the creeps are the crypts. Yet even the one, which, when I described it in THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, brought an indignant letter from a reader (in the country) complaining that I was descending to Grand Guignol, has been "redecorated." It has been whitewashed. The vaults have been electrically lit. The sarcophagi, in which, displacing the corpses of centuries, shelterers slept, have now given place to porcelain lavatories. The sardonic touch still remains, however, in the Judgment Day sandwich board which has been used to blackout one of the submerged windows—"Sinners shall Perish."

No one would now recognise London's biggest communal shelter from the horrific—but more than justified—descriptions given in this journal early in the Blitz. The margarine and the tide of filth are gone. Even now there is no excuse for being lyrical about this shelter, but it is a Ritz Lounge to what it was. Heavy baffle-walls have been built. The unsafe portion has been closed—not without vociferous protest. Many of the bays which once held food are now the wooden platforms on which the people sleep in comfort. Bunks have been installed, thus drastically, and fortunately, reducing the numbers. Water-sanitation has been installed and washing facilities are being provided. The medical post, once started and run by a volunteer doctor, is now well equipped, with a resident doctor and nurse in charge. Canteens have been fitted, replacing the hucksters who used to go round with greasy boxes of redolent, clammy fried fish and gelatinous chips. Shelter entertainments have been reasonably provided. Women police have been introduced to discourage the prostitutes' parade.

One reason for the reduction in the overcrowding of the shelters is the system of season tickets for the bunks and the provision of alternative accommodation in basement shelters. The job of persuading the people to move was not an easy one. Shelter life had become community life and it was rather like swopping a club. Another factor was the spontaneous migration of the like to like. Or, one might say, lice to lice; because one example of it was the way in which lousy people began to acquire their special shelters. They enjoyed their private lice. It was not a case of officially designating a shelter for them; they just took up their lice and walked! This is not fanciful, it is a fact borne out by the investigations of the Ministry of Health, when it discovered to its great surprise that the lice population in the shelters was not increasing as everyone, in view of the conditions, and without reflection on the normal habits of shelterers, expected. There were, of course, the powers which the shelter marshals had of expelling lousy people, or of insisting on them being disinfected. But a nod was as good as a writ.

The speed-up of the reforms dates, quite definitely, from the appointment of Herbert Morrison as Home Secretary and Minister for Home Security, and of Ellen Wilkinson as his Under-Secretary. They tackled with energy what those of us who were living with the problem knew to be a stupendous task—a desperate legacy of the Appeasement Government. They had, too (let us admit it), a certain amount of good fortune. The Blitz on London eased off, during the winter months, and allowed for overtaking arrears. It is not proposed to discuss here the still unresolved controversy over shelter technics—the question of deep shelters, as against dispersal into domestic shelters; there is still a violent cross-fire of criticism. But the Morrison-Wilkinson approach found a practical expression in the appointment of Alderman Charles Key, M.P., in the beginning of January, as Regional Commissioner for Shelters for London.

Charlie Key, throughout the Blitz, had proved himself one of the outstanding personalities in local government. His appointment meant that into the regional system was introduced the element of local government which had never been properly recognised; he understood the problems of local administration, and he knew most of the answers. His own record of civil defence administration in Poplar prior to the Blitz had revealed foresight and imagination. Poplar had waterproofed its Anderson shelters in the expansive days when materials were not at a premium. It had, in defiance of the Home Office, like several other intelligent authorities, insisted upon "overhangs" on surface shelters. This technical detail, which simply meant having the "lid" of the shelter extending out beyond the walls, was to have a profound effect on the use of these shelters. It meant that the water from the roof overflowed clear of the walls. But Whitehall stupidity, which went the length of threatening Poplar, insisted on the roof being flush with the walls, with the result that surface shelters were rendered uninhabitable by damp. When, to quote a statement in the House of Commons, more than half of the Poplar houses had been damaged by the Luftwaffe, Charlie Key had introduced the principle of the "overcoat shelter." This was a matter of using bricks from the demolished houses to build a second shelter over the blast-proof one, with consequent benefit in reducing damp, noise and increasing comfort. He had already tried out heating.

Within a month of his appointment, Commissioner Key was able to produce a gratifying "balance sheet" some of which, of course, he had inherited. He was able to show that there were public shelters, exclusive of the Tubes, for 1,370,000 (19 per cent. of the London Region population), and domestic shelters for 4,461,000 (61 per cent.). Thus 80 per cent. of the population had access to shelter. In the Inner London Region this figure was 92 per cent. and basement shelters were still being taken over, many of them being earmarked in case epidemics should start in the other shelters. Over 18,000 additional Andersons had been provided during the month. Bunks had been provided for nearly half a million people. Stoves had been produced for 13,000 shelters and nearly 2,000 canteens—excluding the Tubes—were feeding a quarter of a million people every night. Five hundred medical posts had been established and over two hundred doctors were making calls. These are the statistics, for which Key could quite properly take credit; the application is another matter, varying considerably from district to district. Feeding, for example, is extremely patchy, depending largely on whether or not it has been left to private, profit-making concerns, or whether it is on a truly communal basis. He appointed Mrs. Cresswich Atkinson as Assistant Commissioner in Charge of Welfare.

Most encouraging of all, however, is the changed attitude of the shelter population. Gone is that dull, querulous apathy. The best expression of the new attitude of mind is to be found in the shelter committees. These are new units of democracy. Since the early days, when the Communists tried to "nobble" them and the all-too-ready distrust of them as "Communist cells" on the part of the authorities (and Ministers), these committees have proved their worth. They are recruited mainly from people who have never found any kind of expression hitherto in active political or administrative work—the back-street acquiescents. Now they are suddenly finding self-expression and self-confidence.

Take as an example the second biggest shelter—and at one time the second worst—in London. It is divided into cubicles, really a misnomer, since they are actually dormitories with bunks for between 20 and 30 people. Each dormitory elects a representative to the Shelter Committee, which in turn appoints an Executive and other committees, including one which runs the canteen and another the Youth activities. This shelter has a well-run canteen, which was "loaned" to it and which is run by the shelterers themselves. That is to say, they supervise policy but the actual catering—including the provision of Blitz Broth and wholemeal bread, the Ministry of Food's all-in meal—is done by two qualified manageresses on a twenty-four-hours-on and twenty-four-hours-off basis, assisted by a full-salaried staff recruited from among the shelterers. So successful has this canteen been that not only has the Shelter Committee offered to repay their benefactor, and arranged for the opening of a second canteen within the shelter, but is suffering acutely from an embarrassment of profits.

I attended a Shelter Committee at which this was discussed. In the most efficient and businesslike way they decided that every child in the shelter should be given free milk every day. The Committee also raised with me the question of the attitude of the resident shelter doctor. I suggested that, in the friendliest manner, they should consult with him on the various problems which I have already discussed in THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION and should invite

him to join the Shelter Committee. This has been done and cordial relations have been established.

The Committee discussed questions of shelter cleanliness. One might have expected, not unreasonably, that they would demand that the borough should do this and do that. Rather surprisingly, this was not their method at all. They took the line that cleanliness was primarily their own concern, that, apart from each exercising personal care, they should, as delegates, insist upon the proper conduct of others.

The Youth Committee delegates discussed extended education in the shelter and the supply of books. All this was done in the best Board-room fashion. Inevitably, one of the whisperers came up to me in the shelter afterwards and muttered: "Of course, you know that there are Communists amongst them." To which I replied: "There may be bigamists amongst them; I didn't enquire; I don't care; I'm prepared to judge them by their deeds." This Committee is linked with the committees of all the other shelters in the borough through a co-ordinating committee.

This was the shelter where, in the most respectful way, the Committee asked the Controller of Stepney, Mr. Eric Adams, to replace the existing Shelter Marshal by Mickey Davies. Mickey, the Midget, only 3ft. 6in. tall, is one of the great figures of the Blitz. His services in helping to redeem this shelter from the state in which it originally was, was rewarded when the Controller wisely showed his faith in the Committee and accepted him as their nomination. The City of Westminster showed similar judgment when it appointed Fred Copeman, famous as a leader of the International Brigade in Spain, to take charge of its shelters. Anyone who knows the Westminster shelters and the uncompromising efficiency, plus understanding, with which they are run, will give Westminster full marks for its foresight.

The Tubes, as we all know, were literally commandeered by the people. Conditions were deplorable at the beginning. Now the L.P.T.B. and the local authorities make it a point of honour to see that these officially recognised Tube shelters are well run. Bunks have been installed in most of the stations. Sanitation has been introduced, under difficulties, since the Tubes lie below the drain levels. The Board have provided train kitchens, canteens and waitresses. Tickets have been allocated to the "regulars," but it is still painful to see people sleeping on the stairs with the steps in the small of their backs.

Great play has been made of the fact that on a quiet Sunday night in January only 4 per cent. of the population of the London Region used the public shelters—occupying a fifth of the available accommodation. This is gratifying only as showing that Londoners have not developed a shelter mentality. It will be a tragic mistake if it is made an excuse for assuming that, under an intensive Blitz, people will not be driven back again into big communal shelters. The first principle, as I keep on insisting, is that the hardiest of us are driven to find sleep, away from noise. The Blitz showed us that people found sleep in communal shelters, even though the safety of some of them was only an illusion.

One thing is quite obvious now, that quite a number of people are enjoying shelter life—people who, in their poverty and through lack of facilities, had no access to social amenities and who now find these in the friendly, stimulating "Blitz Brotherhood" of the shelters.

Above all, the people of this country ought to take a large part of the credit for the transformation of shelter life. Some of us know at first hand the intolerance with which exposure of the shelters was met in September by Ministers and others. Democracy and free criticism have proved themselves in the way in which public demand has humanised the conditions.

RITCHIE CALDER

TWOPENCE-HALFPENNY

ONE of the many things that keep alive my faith in the essential decency of human nature is the way in which, now that the cost of sending a letter has gone up to twopence-halfpenny, people continue to write letters—and post them. There is a kind of generosity in the born letter-writer that is proof against all the attempts of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to discourage him. I was never a letter-writer myself, even in the days of the penny post, so that I can praise the tribe without being suspected of egotism. Imagine a man sitting down to write something for nothing; to me such a thing would be inconceivable if I did not know from experience that it not only happens but is fairly common. I myself grudge every action of the muscles that guides the movement of a pen. If I were convicted of a crime and sentenced to a term of hard labour, the worst form of hard labour I can think of would be having to write letters—to write letters even to my dearest friends. A friend once said to me: "I'm always afraid to see your handwriting on an envelope because I know that you never write unless somebody is ill or something serious has happened." This miserliness about ink has often weighed on my conscience, and I know that it is no more defensible than miserliness about money. Like miserliness about money, however, it is an all but incurable disease. Having suffered from it all my life, I am by now so much the more able to appreciate the moral excellence of people who can sit down and toss off a letter with as little sense of doing anything out of the ordinary as if they were only signing a post-dated cheque.

To the generous company of Nature's letter-writers I have recently been indebted for a number of suggestions of something to write about. This I regard as charity on the grand scale. To be given a subject is like having someone voluntarily doing one's work, or a part of it, for nothing. Hence, my opinion of human nature rose the other day when a correspondent, at a cost of twopence-halfpenny, wrote to me suggesting that I should write "an article on 'Purses,' more particularly a delineation of men (I dub them 'old women') who carry purses." "It irritates me," my correspondent went on, "to be in the company of a 'man' who fumbles with a purse when paying a small bill in a shop. . . . These 'purse-fumblers' are continually on the lookout for safety; they are full of apprehension, anxiety, and unpleasant sensations of fear, fright and panic. The 'purse-fumbler,' too, will have very thick soles to his boots and, more often than not, when attending a summer outdoor gathering, will be equipped in dress and general appearance for any meteorological contingency. I know of one who turned up at a summer gathering attired in a straw hat, overcoat, umbrella, white shoes, waterproof leggings and a scarf. One member of the company referred to him as an 'adjectival old sketch!'"

Till I read this letter I had never thought seriously on the subject of purses. I had, of course, read about Iago's purse, which must have been empty; and I had seen purses but never possessed one. I have always regarded them as things aunts gave nephews at Christmas because they do not know what nephews like. I thought of them as being in the same class as mufflers—gifts from the well-meaning to the ill-satisfied. At the back of my mind, too, was a saying of (I think) Mr. Desmond MacCarthy who once, in a discussion of the question, "What is a gentleman?" declared: "No gentleman carries a purse." For myself, however antipathetic though I am to many things, I had never been conscious of feeling an antipathy to purses. I can see a man taking out his purse at the pay-desk in a teashop and still regard him as human. Note-cases I dislike, but that is because, after a note-case had been thrust on me on the eve of a visit to Rome, my pocket was emptied of it and seven pounds with ridiculous ease in St. Peter's, while I was absorbed in watching a religious ceremony. But I know many good men who carry note-cases—men who, if you want to borrow ten shillings in an emergency say: "Make it a quid, old boy," or "If you're short, why not have a fiver?" Is my correspondent certain that no purse-carrier is capable of such princeliness? For myself I do not know, and I shall keep an open mind till I have made a closer study of the subject.

Even after the most thorough investigation, however, I cannot hope to rival my correspondent's delineation of the character and costume of the "purse-fumbler." His description of the "purse-fumbler's" clothes at the summer gathering might have come straight from a nightmare of Bertie Wooster's in which he dreamt that he had turned up so clad at Ascot on Gold Cup day. It has certainly made me consider the subject of purses and their effect on the character with a more eager curiosity than I should have thought possible a short time ago.

Another correspondent has also lit up new vistas for the inquiring mind. He says that he has made a discovery which he thinks might make a subject for an article. "Perhaps, it is a commonplace," he writes, "but here it is. Practically every word in English that begins with SN has an unpleasant, deprecatory or approbrious meaning." He admits that "snow" may be an exception, but adds: "Personally, I find it most unpleasant." To me, I confess, my correspondent's discovery came with as surprising an effect as the sight of the Pacific to stout Cortez. My first instinct was to doubt and contradict, but I could not think of a single word beginning with "sn" that suggested anything pleasant except "snood," and I am probably prejudiced in favour of "snood" by the fact that we were taught to use it when translating the *Bacchae*, a play that I happened to like very much in my late teens. I liked "snood" as I liked "bryony," though I did not know what bryony looked like. Was it the same thing as smilax—a word that filled the imagination with poetry, but might

not have done so if I had known the dictionary definition: "Genus of climbing shrubs, some of which yield sarsaparilla." Things of this kind, however, if one is ignorant enough, affect the imagination, and one of the loveliest of them seemed to me to be the word "snood."

I took up the dictionary hoping to find that, among words beginning with "sn," it had some partners in beauty. But what a catalogue of the despicable went on for column after column! It began with "snack"—not a vile thing in itself, perhaps, but how vile in comparison with a real meal! "Snag" soon followed—"jagged projecting point, e.g., irregular or broken tooth." Then came "snail"—"kinds of slimy, slow-creeping gasteropod mollusc." "Snake" came after—among other things, "treacherous cold-hearted person." The definition of "snap" began: "Make sudden audible bite (dog snapped viciously)."

"Snare," "snarl," "snatch," "sneak" and "sneer" were no more suggestive of the beautiful and the good. I paused for a moment at the word "sneeze"—"make explosive sound in involuntarily expelling anything that irritates interior of nose"; but, though I yield to no man in enjoyment of a sneeze, I agree that it does not add to human dignity. As for "snick," what hot water I once got into with seasoned cricketers for writing that Woolley had "snicked" a ball to the boundary when I should have written "flicked." "Snide" is a word of which I had not heard before, but apparently it means "counterfeit, bogus." "Sniff," "snigger," "snip," "snippet," "snivel," are all words that introduce us to a world, not of lordly, but of mean things. "Snob" and "snook" are no better; and, as for "snooze," it destroys in one syllable all the magic that the poets have woven round sleep. I will not continue the catalogue, however. "Snore," "snort," "snout"—the monotony of ugliness becomes too depressing.

After thinking over the matter, I began to wonder whether the eminent philologist may not have been right who maintained that the sounds of words were not accidental but were closely related to the nature of the things they name. He would have said, for example, unless I misinterpret him, that a donkey was called a donkey because it was the only sound, except "ass," that could properly describe a donkey. This reasoning appeals to me strongly. I cannot imagine a sparrow's being called a raven or a raven's being called a sparrow in any rational scheme of things. Languages vary from country to country, but the local language always producing the sounds that represent things accurately to the ears of the local people. The gardener's wife sounds different in French and in English, but that is probably because in France and in England she is a different sort of person. Can anyone imagine any alternatives for the names of risotto, spaghetti and zabaglione in Italy? Sound and sense are in all cases closely linked together.

I hope that my correspondent, having made his discovery that certain combinations of letters are suggestive of ugliness and belittlement, will now go on to investigate the problem whether other combinations of letters are by their sound suggestive of beauty. I tried "sp" at a venture, with its "sport," "splendid" and "Spanish," but the effect of these was neutralised by "splodge," "splurge" and "spoof."

This is a subject, like purses, that I should like to go into and, perhaps, write about some day. And there was another subject a third correspondent invited me to write about, but, as I am not paid by space, I defer consideration of it to some future date. Y. Y.

PEACE-MAKING

[FROM A CORRESPONDENT]

INTO the solemn meeting of the *Academie Française* a paralytic, flabby old man is carried. He stares with bulgy, faded eyes over the refined, learned heads of the assembled company in the large hall. His soft, fat face lacks any sign of spiritual refinement. One wonders who this man is and how he has found a place here. As I search his face, I recognise, under the fat pillows of his cheeks, the once brutally vital man, General Franchet d'Esperey, with whom I passed through one of the most dreadful moments of my life.

It is 1918, the beginning of November. I am in the room in a villa which stands in the midst of the shelled and ruined Belgrade. A solitary candle is burning in the room. About a dozen silent and [illegible] are waiting in the anteroom of the Hungarian Democratic Republic, ministers, political experts and some leading publicists. We are waiting for the Commander-in-Chief of the French Balkan Army after his historic achievement of the surrender of Bulgaria, which gave the first decisive push towards the collapse of the Central Powers. He is now entrusted with conducting the armistice negotiations with us, Hungarians. After the ardent four-year fight, this is the first meeting of a representative of the Entente with representatives of the Central Powers. A fateful moment. Count Karolyi is backed by the confidence of a nation which at that time represented more than twenty million people. This meeting is the result of his persistent efforts, throughout the war, to transform a feudal Hungary into a democratic, progressive land. President Wilson's declaration has given new strength and encouragement to his line of policy. The obvious anti-German tendency of his policy, and its marked hatred of the Imperial Junker Germany, has often caused the Entente press to praise him and his followers in sympathetic articles.

Now we await the General who represents the Entente Powers, and somehow we expect the reward for our bold and dangerous policy of attempting to introduce democracy, in the Western sense of the word, into a backward feudal State. We were little, negative Pétains of our country; just as he expected a reward from Hitler for being a Fascist, so we expected our recompense from the Democracies for our Wilsonism. If the kind of man we imagined and expected had arrived perhaps the world would look a bit different to-day. But what happened?

After a long, uncanny wait, a short, bull-necked, Napoleonic type of man rushed into the room, followed by some of his officers. Without a word of greeting to us he ran to the fireplace, leaned against the mantelpiece, with his fat right hand hanging loosely over the edge, and gave us a brusque sign with his left to line up, like guilty schoolchildren. He fired short questions as to who were the people present. When one of them, the editor of a leading daily paper, informed him of his profession, he roared, with a mixture of a *Comédie Française* tyrant and a sergeant-major of the garrison yard: "You have insulted *La France!*" His voice shook the building which the bombs had spared. The editor replied, with due reverence, that his presence on this occasion was due to his rather risky and persistent propaganda, throughout the war, in favour of a pro-Entente policy. After two furious stamps with his booted foot, he roared again: "Assez, assez!"—and brief interviews with the others followed in the same fashion. He did not even appear to be interested in President Karolyi's explanation that he was not responsible for the war of his imperialist and feudal predecessors. The President then proceeded, in the name of a new and regenerated Hungary, to expound his views on a healthy co-operation in the Danube valley, within the framework of which all the nationalities might find an autonomous existence amongst the rest of the nations. Franchet d'Esperey was apparently completely uninterested in the President's speech; hardly waiting for it to end, he picked up the rustling sheets of his own prepared speech.

Before beginning the recital of his memorandum he shouted at President Karolyi, pointing to the burnt-out candle stump, accusing him of having cut off the supply of electricity. He ignored the President when he dared to reply that this was the work of the retiring German Field Marshal Gen. Mackensen, and began his recital. The threatening tone of the memorandum would have been suitable for the imperialist leaders of the feudal Hungary which had recently collapsed, and it entirely disregarded the Entente sympathies of the present negotiators. After listening to this death-sentence of his country, Count Karolyi tried to explain that the complete dismemberment of his country, the reduction of its population of 22 millions to one of 8 millions, would result in starvation; there would be no fuel to run the trains; no raw materials to supply the factories; and no bread to feed the masses if all the mills stopped. Franchet d'Esperey's reply was Molière, ridiculous but for its tragedy. It betrayed his complete lack of knowledge of Central Europe and of the responsibilities of those who wished to re-establish order there. "Haven't you got wind-mills?" he said. "No," answered Count Karolyi, "it is not customary in our country." He stared at us with majestic contempt and muttered sarcastically: "What a land, what a land."

So, the Hungarian democracy's destiny was sealed. And similar was the fate of the Wilsonian Prime Minister of Austria, Lamarch; the pacifist Chancellor of Germany, Max v. Baden; his Entente-friendly Foreign Minister, Erzberger; the great democratic Foreign Minister, Rathenau: or of course the [illegible] who wanted to keep single instance where the unofficial, counter-revolutionary [illegible] there was not a forces were not officially backed by the Entente Powers.

I believe this twenty-year-old scene of fateful irresponsibility presents one of the keys to the understanding of the constant presence

of the État Français, with all her Pétains, Lavals and Bonnets, in the French Republic. We should note that for these glorious deeds Franchet d'Esperey not only became one of the immortals, but already during his lifetime had bestowed upon him the rare honour of having one of the splendid boulevards, crossing the Bois de Boulogne, named after him. I must add that not only military representatives, but also civil members of the various Entente commissions and later even embassies did not show other sentiments towards the democratic strivings in Central Europe.

The fate of countries and of millions of individuals were decided at meetings such as this. The Runcimans had many predecessors. The aim of this little story is to prevent them having successors.

WORDS AND PICTURES

DURING the past three decades a stealthy change has crept over British education. It has been none of the revolutions for which any progressive school of educationists has striven. Pioneers have introduced certain reforms. But their influence is negligible compared to that of the potent revolutionaries of Hollywood and Wardour Street. With little regard for anything except profit, these good business men have provided the majority of Britons with post-primary education. Designed as entertainment, their curricula are very different from the courses planned for secondary, university and adult instruction. But every year, the movies and picture papers have encroached further on the functions of school and college. The reasons are more technical than social. At schools, most subjects are taught by words, by reading, writing and speaking. Classroom language is not usually the dialect current in the home, but the *lingua franca* of the dominant "educated" class. For this reason, and a variety of others, such as the difficulty of reading in a crowded home and the fact that few people form the habit of reading before the age of fourteen, book learning seldom survives the school-leaving age. It is regarded with a mixture of dislike, because of remembered difficulties at school, and contempt, because the language and often the ideas contained in books are alien to the culture of the working class.

The B.B.C. tries to carry education into adult life. But language again becomes the barrier. It is forced to use a literary vocabulary remote from nine-tenths of its audience. The flat impersonal voice of the "cultured" Englishman arouses instinctive distrust in the majority of listeners; and the most popular broadcasters (Priestley, Hilton, Middleton) owe much of their success to the possession of regional accents. But the ear tires more easily than the eye: and the symbols of the screen are more powerful and catholic than words, which vary in accent and meaning from county to county. All recognise a pound note from a photograph, though to some it is a "quid" and to others a "oncer" or a "nicker."

In the past, intelligence and educability were tied to literacy; because in the past literature was the most important, indeed almost the only, method of instruction. But to-day the word has been challenged and largely dominated by the picture. Advertisers, as a result of experience and research, appeal first with pictures and only secondly with letterpress. The mass circulation of the *Daily Mirror* and *Sketch*, *Illustrated* and *Picture Post* proves and improves the standards of popular picturacy. The content of a movie may be piffling, but the complex idiom of the cinelanguage which it uses, though plain to the urchin in the sixpennies, would baffle the literate intellects of Pythagoras, Spinoza or Erasmus Darwin. Long ago drawing gave way to writing, but now the tide flows back.

The number of modern Britons who cannot read or write is small; but the number is enormous of those who do not read or write as part of their daily work and pleasure. Their vocabulary is restricted, their reading hesitant, their spelling phonetic. Yet their Intelligence Quotas are not below average and they are readily educable, provided the technique is used with which they are familiar. They may be able to read or write, but they are predominantly picturates. Just as those Mexican Indians who are illiterate prove the best interpreters of Aztec picture script, so generally those who are not highly literate develop a compensating sensitivity to pictorial symbols.

As a technique of education, the pictorial method alone is indefensible, because it is purely passive. Criticism and discussion demand the vocabulary and energy of literature. But as a method of mass-instruction in time of [illegible] of supreme importance. [illegible] photograph [illegible] the present time, literary methods are still being used to train the Militia and Home Guard in the numerous subjects necessary to modern warfare. N.C.O. instructors, expert mechanics with sound theoretical knowledge of their subject but with as few letters as their pupils, dictate notes which when first composed were obscured by unnecessary terminology and by the time they are delivered are an ungrammatical mumbo-jumbo almost as bewildering to the lecturer as to his class. A hole is an "orifice." "Depression," "compression" and "pressure" are synonyms. Commas and full stops are as promiscuous as nuns in the *Decameron*.

The effect of these lectures on trainees is the opposite to that intended. Men with years of experience as truck drivers and garage mechanics, men who can take down an engine, rebore a cylinder, fit a big-end, are filled with anger and humiliation because they know that "ignition" is not spelt "nyshun" but can't think how else to spell it. Some answer their examination questions by merely drawing diagrams, the picturate's retort to the literate; others by handing in blank sheets to register their protest. If this is the confusion of those with practical experience of their subject, what of those without?

The present method of theoretical training is a long agony to most trainees, because at an adult age they are plunged back into the confusion of the schoolroom. It is not the difficulty of the subjects they must learn which defeats them, but the difficulty of the way they are taught. The vocabulary and the writing make them wild. The attitude, "They can draft me into the army, but they can't send me back to school," is unfortunately becoming common.

There is no subject in the army curriculum the theory of which cannot be treated better by films than by lectures. The indispensable memoranda should be written in basic English and printed copies distributed to each man after the film-show. The camera can range swiftly from theory to practice, principle to example, lecture room to garage and garage to field of battle. Film technique is the only technique adapted to the picturate mentality of the new army: and it can show the eye what the most vivid words can only feebly suggest.

To produce a mass army of trained mechanical fighters, films must supersede lectures. A previous contributor to this journal has pointed out that many producers, directors, cameramen, script-writers and technicians have already been conscripted. More are being called up every month. Any man used to the handling of machinery can be trained in a fortnight to the use of a sub-standard projector. By utilising the personnel already under its command, the Army could form immediately a Corps of the dimensions necessary to bring methods of instruction into line with modern methods of warfare.

There is already in existence a library of excellent technical films explaining the working of the I.C. engine, made by the Shell Film Unit. The Army Technical Training Unit has been making films hard for the last three years, few of which should yet be obsolete. Urban units of the Home Guard can be instructed in local cinemas on Sunday mornings and afternoons. Mobile film units, possibly those operating under the auspices of the Ministry of Information, can bring the films to outlying districts.

Even if the cost of training soldiers by film exceeded the present methods, the scheme would not be invalidated. But, in fact, the present training period could be reduced by at least one month in five by the wholesale adoption of film-instruction. This economy of four weeks, in wages, family allowances, maintenance in food, shelter and clothing, would be more than sufficient to pay the full cost of training and equipping the new Corps.

POEM

HERE, where the taut wave hangs
Its tented tons, we steer
Through rocking arch of eye
And creaking reach of ear,
Anchored to flying sky,
And chained to changing fear.

O when shall we, all spent,
Row in to some far strand,
And find, to our content,
The original land
From which our boat once went,
Though not the one we planned.

Us on that happy day
This fierce sea will release.
The final glaze of peace,
Our oars we all will lay
Down, and desire will cease.

W. R. RODGERS

THE MOVIES

"The World in Flames," at the Plaza
"The Philadelphia Story," at the Empire

Time-travel of one sort and another is a favourite modern theme. Usually it involves stepping into the future; but slipping back into the past—on the immediate gradient of history—may provide effects at least as curious. Last August: incredible, but the Blitz hadn't then started. June: we were doing our best to swallow the fall of Paris. April—less than a year ago—Hitler was still on his own side of the Rhine, and Mussolini still to be reckoned with. Recede a little further and history becomes pre-history, with reconstructed figures rising out of a swamp.

The World in Flames shows us the last ten years in flashes from newsreels. Here, in case we have forgotten what they looked like, are the dwindling years of peace, the slump, the New Deal, the rise of Hitler, the war beginning in China and spreading from Spain and Abyssinia across the whole of Europe. These scenes, packed by Paramount into an hour, stimulate vividly and painfully our sense of current history, the more so because many of the shots once raised in the mind of the casual viewer a question-mark to which he now knows the answer. It is difficult now to visualise a rain-coated Hitler who had lost the vote to Hindenburg, but here they are, the two walking side by side. The "famous" moments turn up again like old cartoons; and incredulity reaches its height with Mr. Chamberlain stepping out of an aeroplane and waving a piece of paper to the crowd. The commentary is interrupted while he speaks a few words. No wonder he was Low's favourite model; but from this side of time an innocent and pathetic eagerness shines out of appeasement. Our sense of reality is restored with pictures of actual war. These have been brilliantly brought together, sometimes—the invasion of Poland, for example—from enemy sources. Many of the best photographs were taken by Paramount's own cameramen, and there is a remarkable sequence showing a Nazi raid on an open town in Sweden; the attack is seen from a wood on an adjacent hill and the aeroplanes fly over the town level with the camera. The same cameraman, Arthur Menken, also recorded in some detail the harried evacuation from Norway. *The World in Flames* is aimed chiefly at American audiences—the Pan-American Conference is set against Hitler's European conquest—but it should be seen by everyone who finds our own newsreels complacently inadequate.

The Philadelphia Story makes one wish that every star would take a two years' rest between films. In many cases it would lead to retirement, and the survivors would be twice as good for the experience. Miss Hepburn at any rate seems to have benefited from her close season—which was spent, by the way, acting in the play which now appears as a film. She comes to the screen fresh and saturated in her part, and even if the film had crumbled (which it doesn't), her performance, one feels, would still have been striking. With a rather flimsily built situation *The Philadelphia Story* goes quite a long way. Miss Hepburn, as a rich, richly individual rogue-wife, with the best Brontë looks, is about to marry for a second time. Three moths flutter round the flame: her first husband (Cary Grant), also rich, designs yachts, drinks a bit and has a hard right; the husband-to-be (an obvious non-starter) is rich, too, but self-made and conventionally solid; and a young hard-up, sensitively tough writer (James Stewart), who keeps alive on yellow journalism, has been sent down by the editor of *Spy* to cover the wedding. Events are confined to a day and a half, and in that space each of the three has his hour when he can hope to pull things his way. The complications begin with farce, and end with sultry bursts of sentiment and comedy. Husband No. 1 wins—just in time, with the congregation waiting beyond the doors. The Hepburn Diana in action—virgin queen or bronze goddess? they ask—is splendid; and though the solution—she has a woman's heart after all—may sound sentimental, it is in fact neatly and excitingly worked out. The film (and the play, too, I imagine) does more than cover the bare bones of a situation. James Stewart, for example, as the emotionally muddled writer gives an admirable performance: he makes one of the very few convincing writers I remember seeing on a screen. Ronald Colman not so long ago gave us a painter whose works we could hardly be anxious to look at. But here one experiences a genuine curiosity about the young journalist's book of short stories; one is made to feel (thanks to Mr. Stewart) that it has promise. WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

THE COMING WEEK

SATURDAY, March 8th—
Royal Philharmonic Society Concert, Queen's Hall, 2.15.
National Council for Civil Liberties Annual General Meeting, Caxton Hall (Court Room), 2.15.
E. Hardy (Socialist Party): "Freedom of the Press," Conway Hall, 4.

SUNDAY, March 9th—
C. E. M. Joad: "Henri Bergson, the Man and His Philosophy," Conway Hall, 11.
K. B. Smellie: "Social Philosophy—Modern to Kant" (contd.), 17 Manchester Street, W.1.

MONDAY, March 10th—
Fabian International Affairs Group Snack Lunch, D. Christie Tait: "Social Reconstruction in Europe After the War," 12 Great Newport Street, W.C.2, 1.

TUESDAY, March 11th—
Maj. E. Maxwell Fry: "Research on a Plan for London," Housing Centre, 1.
C. F. A. Pantin: "The Origin of Life," Royal Institution, 2.30.

WEDNESDAY, March 12th—
M. André Labarthe: "Quelques aspects de l'Art français," Institut Français, 3.

Correspondence

ORGANISING FOR WAR ECONOMY

SIR,—The measures announced by the President of the Board of Trade calculated to close down factories which have become redundant as a consequence of the cut in home consumption of unessential goods are highly welcome. They will permit the maximum liberation of men and machinery from these industries to be incorporated in the war sector whose expansion is a vital need. Up till now this cut could not have the desired effect, as the decrease in production was met by a reduction of the scale of operations in most if not all of the existing firms. Hence much skilled manpower was retained in the industry unnecessarily because the reduced scale of operations resulted in a decreased productivity per head. The increased cost of production per unit (being the consequence of the undiminished overhead cost, i.e. mainly of the retention of unnecessary manpower) was a potent engine of inflation through its influence on prices and wages.

The new measures do not mean a *further* cut in home supplies—though such further cuts will no doubt have to be made. They merely mean a welcome change in the technique of production. They, therefore, do not impose an additional burden on the industries affected. But the President of the Board of Trade himself stated that in the present position firms "are eating up their working capital," i.e. are making heavy losses. And this is *after* the principles of the Prices of Goods Act has already permitted an increase in prices in accordance with the increase in overhead costs. Thus it is safe to predict that unless a *new* rise in prices is permitted the *increased profits* due to the saving in cost as a result of concentrating output into (presumably) the more efficient firms will not be sufficient to maintain the closed firms financially intact. But a

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LABOUR MONTHLY

March

PRESS FREEDOM IN WARTIME

A Symposium:
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Sir Richard Acland, M.P.
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Ronald Kidd W. H. Thompson
Lord Ponsonby

A 'NEW ORDER' IN BRITAIN?

FUTURE OF THE LABOUR PARTY

THE BRITISH TOTALITARIANS

THE FRAUD OF THE COST-OF-LIVING INDEX

ENGELS' 'ORIGIN OF THE FAMILY'

Review by Prof. George Thomson

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new rise in prices would be tantamount to new, concealed indirect taxation of a wholly arbitrary character depending mainly on the financial structure of the industry affected, surely a wrong criterion. The obsession of the Treasury that only taxes imposed by the State are obnoxious but not those imposed by cartels is about to produce another serious threat to our war economic system. If the profits of the remaining firms are insufficient to carry the financial burden of the industry there is everything to be said for a direct financial assistance to the pools rather than face widespread financial unsettlement or a new wave of price rises.

A further warning is to be added. If industry is to be reorganised it should be reorganised under strict Government supervision to safeguard the interests of the weaker firms and to make full use of the management, skill, etc., of the firms closed down for reasons mainly unconnected with their *technical* qualifications, the sole criterion in war. If this so-called self-government of industry is permitted to crystallise itself we shall be gravely prejudicing the problems of reconstruction. We shall find that we have lost our liberty to choose between a return to a competitive system and the establishment of a planned economic system. We shall be confronted with a strongly entrenched co-operative organisation of industry on a restrictionist basis—not unlike the Italian fascist economy—impossible to unscramble. Unfortunately the influence of Trade Union leaders is exerted—unwittingly—in the same direction to the ultimate disadvantage of those whose interests they think they represent. But the record of the Duce's system surely does not invite imitation.

T. BALOGH

THE PEOPLE'S ARMY

SIR,—There appeared in your last week's issue a letter signed "Conscript," in which the writer complains of having been refused a commission on account of his Socialist views. Since he draws certain general conclusions from this personal example, I should like to point out that his case is quite exceptional. Like him, I too have been the Chairman of a Labour Party organisation, and like him made no attempt to conceal my Socialist views in the ranks; yet no effort was made to refuse me a Commission on these grounds. I have many Socialist friends who have become officers without difficulty, and it has been reliably stated that the number of members of local L.P. Executives who are now officers runs quite literally into thousands. It is equal nonsense to say, as "Conscript" does, that officers "who believe in a society based on truth and love are less likely to achieve promotion"; on the contrary, there is a growing sympathy for Labour ideals among the officer-class, as indeed in the middle class as a whole.

"Conscript" goes on to infer that the Army is still run by diehard Blimps, rigidly opposed to new ideas. He is years out of date. His thesis is sufficiently disproved by a most informative article, in the same issue of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, describing the widespread development of Education in the Army. No longer is the Army ruled by the cartoonist's apoplectic colonels who were horrified by the thought of mixing education with fighting; to-day every unit has its Education Officer, who can and does draw on panels of speakers which include many prominent Leftists. No longer are "the men" looked upon as an inferior breed of machines who can be messed about without qualm or conscience; on the contrary, it is realised that "in civil life, half the men were sturdy Unionists, imbued with a terrific sense of independence," and that "the ordinary workers are accustomed to think for themselves, to make suggestions, and to reason out problems" (official Army pamphlet). No longer are politics considered completely irrelevant to the problem of Army morale; on the contrary, the War Office urges all platoon commanders to give talks to their platoons on the causes of the war, etc.—and I can assure "Conscript" that these will not by any means all be Right-wing in tone. In fact, the dominance of the old reactionary Blimps has been well and finally broken. The passing of Bingham marked the last burial.

None of this is to say, of course, that we have a genuinely democratic Army—that is a vain hope inside a class system. Unfortunately little improvement has resulted from the gradual broadening of the basis of the officer-class, since the new grammar-school officers have just as little understanding of working-class psychology as the most feudal-minded Old Etonians; indeed, they often make worse officers, or they tend to assimilate the latter's general outlook without at the same time assimilating that touch of rebellious cynicism about spit-and-polish, etc., which often makes the Old Etonian a surprisingly popular officer.

What can be said, however, is that the War Office and the great majority of senior officers are not only genuinely sympathetic to new ideas, but are trying hard to make the Army more intelligent and more democratic in spirit; unfortunately, these efforts are to some extent frustrated by the complacent indifference of beardless young O.C.T.U. products, who are much too delighted with their new uniforms seriously to bother about such trivial matters as morale. It is at the junior, rather than the senior officers, that criticism should be directed. But the trend is certainly in the right direction, and it is foolish to ignore the great advances which are being made.

Finally, the exploits of Dunkirk and North Africa show how easy it is to take too over-simplified a view of the relation between fighting morale and political convictions; perhaps after all the Brigade of Guards have proved themselves at least the equals of Mr. Wintringham's romantic archers of Crecy.

SOCIALIST SUBALTERN

FUTURE OF THE LABOUR PARTY

SIR,—There must be many more of your readers like myself who had followed the early stages of "Future of the Labour Party" discussion with the hope that it would develop to an important constructive conclusion, because the subject is of prime historic value as Bruno Heilig pointed out. Instead of that, Mr. Middleton seems to regard it only as an opportunity for baiting the author of the initiating article on some minor matter and losing his temper to the extent of accusing Mr. Garry Allighan of lying.

Can this discussion now be swung back to the original question of Trade Union domination of the Labour Party and whether that is good or bad? That was the important question that Mr. Allighan postulated and with which, when I saw a letter from Mr. Middleton, I hoped he would deal.

Instead of that he seized on the item of finance and ignored the vital issue. I hope the discussion will not end on that disappointing note. It might be helpful, then, to clear Mr. Middleton's trifling point out of the way by saying that, whether the monies paid by Labour Party members as their subs. for the first three months of 1940 were received at Transport House before the beginning of 1940 or after, the fact remains, as Mr. Allighan has insisted, that "the shrewd device" of including 1940 revenue in 1939 receipts was employed. It must mean that the total 1940 revenue must be short by that amount.

Having cleared that matter up, will Mr. Middleton now pay your readers the compliment of explaining away, if possible, the basic matter of the original article: is Trade Union influence increasing in Labour Party control or does he anticipate that Socialism will increase within the Trade Unions—and which is the better?

ARTHUR JAMES

SIR,—The failure of the two German Socialist parties, as shown by Herr Heilig, is precisely the reason of the ineffectiveness of our own Labour Party. Those who took part in the formation of the Labour Party know, that it derived its success, not from the Trade Union movement, but through the inspiration of the I.L.P. a purely Socialist body. Its driving force was not the demand for higher wages and better working conditions as such, but the selfless appeal to the higher emotions, in the belief that a better life could be created for all mankind. It swept the country as an evangel, and working men and women by the tens of thousands experienced a conversion that gave them a force and power, that no economic appeal alone could have secured.

It's just this spiritual vision that the Trade Union movement cannot supply, and until something akin to the old I.L.P. arrives, to supplement the economic appeal, just so long will the Labour Party drag along on its dreary uninspired way.

"Man does not live by bread alone" is as true in the political sense, as in the religious.

Shipston-on-Stour. B. J. ASTON

THE FUTURE OF ABYSSINIA

SIR,—Professor Jevons does not think that enough credit has been given to the Emperor for his efforts to abolish slavery. He says that under his rule slave markets disappeared and the traffic in slaves with Arabia was suppressed. It is true that public slave markets had entirely disappeared. Trading in slaves had been driven underground, but nevertheless the clandestine sale of slaves in certain known centres was carried on up to the time of the Italian invasion. As long as the status of slavery is allowed to exist, the kidnapping and sale of slaves will continue.

The Red Sea traffic may well have decreased during the Emperor's reign, although no organised effort to intercept slave caravans by means of police or military patrols appears to have been made. It has always been very difficult to obtain information on this subject. Nor was it possible to judge to what extent the British Naval patrols, whose duty it was to watch for slave dhows in the Red Sea, acted as a deterrent to slave traders. There is no evidence that the trade had ceased, and it is probable that a certain number of slaves were smuggled in dhows which plied among the islands and between the unfrequented creeks on the desert coasts of the Red Sea. The responsibility for policing the coast itself nearest to Arabia rested upon the Italian and French Governments.

As regards domestic slavery, the Emperor promulgated two liberal laws in 1924 and 1931, but they remained largely inoperative owing to the opposition and the apathy of the officials in Addis Ababa charged with enforcing them. There were exceptions and, latterly, the Emperor sent some progressive young men to assist Governors in administering the laws. Also, shortly before the outbreak of the Italian war, he sent Colonel Sandford as adviser to the Governor of Magi and to help him to enforce the slavery laws. The Italian war supervened before concrete results could be obtained.

The writer of the article wishes to repeat that his object is not to lower the prestige of the Emperor, but to contribute towards the success of his second tenure of the throne by bringing home to British opinion the formidable nature of the problems he will have upon his hands, and in the handling of which we cannot escape a large responsibility. Among these problems slavery, upon which Professor Jevons concentrates in his reply, is by no means the gravest.

THE WRITER OF THE ARTICLE

FIRE SPOTTING

SIR,—In your issue dated February 8th, one of your correspondents gives his experience when it came to fire-watching for his firm and remarks that the owners and shareholders are safely tucked away in the country. Perhaps he would be interested to hear of what happened in the factory where I work. Before the workers started watching, our elected representative put certain proposals before the owner such as: full equipment, sleeping and washing facilities, two free meals, and time off with pay, the same amount of hours as from an Alert to an All Clear. The most important point, however, from your correspondent's view was that all should take part in the watching. All these points were agreed to and up to the present the owner, directors, and management have all done their bit. This shows that the unity of the workers can always "wring" concessions from the owners of businesses, if they realise their own strength.

14 Glebe Crescent, JACK BROMBERG
Hendon, N.W.4.

LOOTERS AND PRISONS

SIR,—I have read Cicely Craven's letter with special interest, having personally had a taste of wartime Wandsworth.

Three quarters of every batch of prisoners arriving at Wandsworth whilst I was there, both from local courts and "the Bailey"—potentially good citizens—had been sentenced for "looting" (and most of the remainder, like myself, had fallen foul of the new Defence Regulations). Many of them—the "looters"—would drift around in a daze for days, as if unable to believe *This* had happened to *Them*; that *They* were inside a prison. When at last they came out of the daze, bitterness almost warped them.

Potentially good citizens from respectable homes, patriotic to the first degree, suddenly flung into a wartime prison for a first offence without option of fine. Locked in cells (mostly upper ones) without a glimmer of light, except flares and fires of bombs and barrage, from when the alert went about six in the evening, alone and helpless through the hell of bombed night. Once, when bombs dropped on the prison itself, the Gov'nor sent round cigarettes. Better to invest in Players' Weights than report "the trapped prisoners panicked."

Privileges stopped because of the war, Chapel

SUPPLEMENT

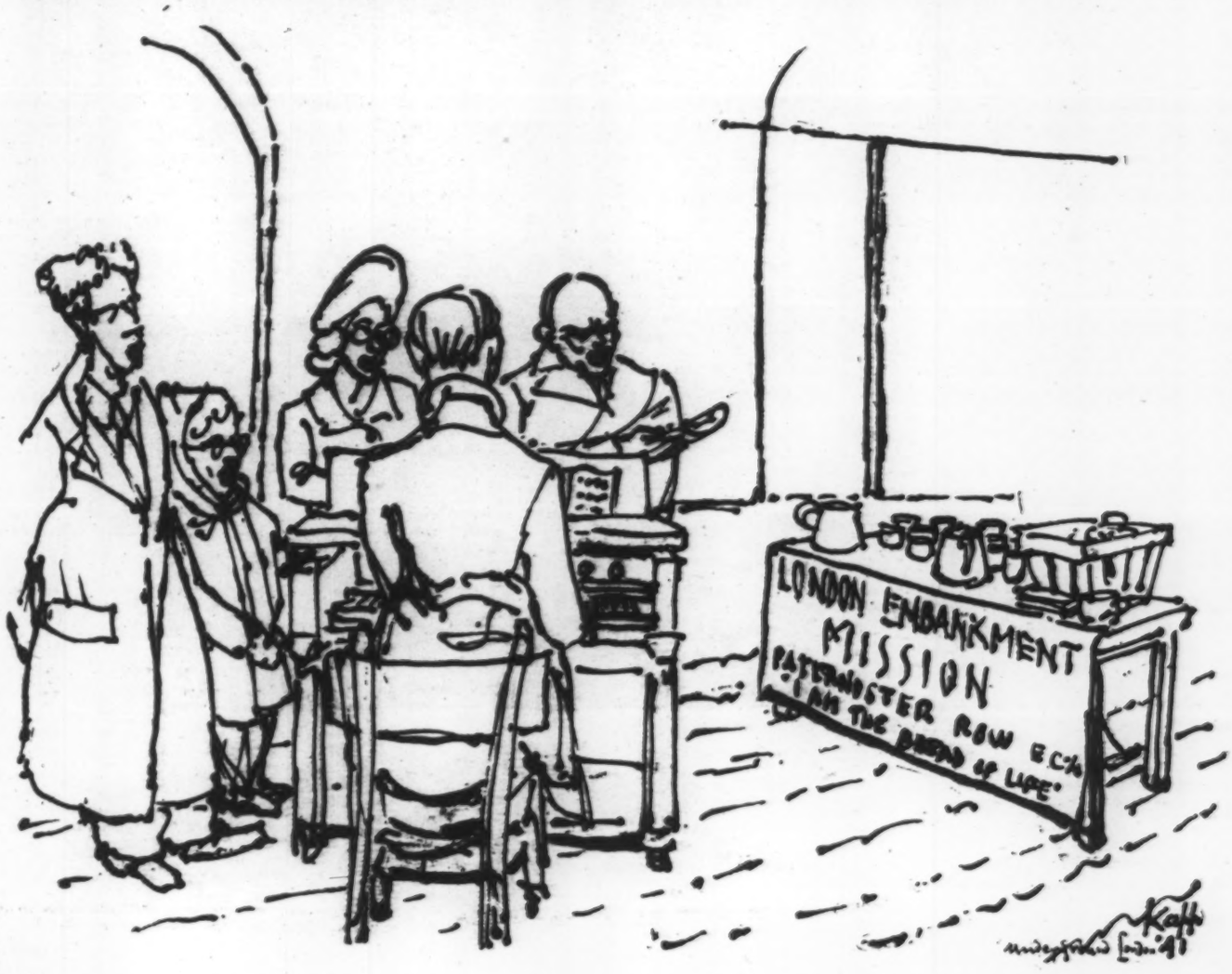
Shelter Life

as seen by KAPP

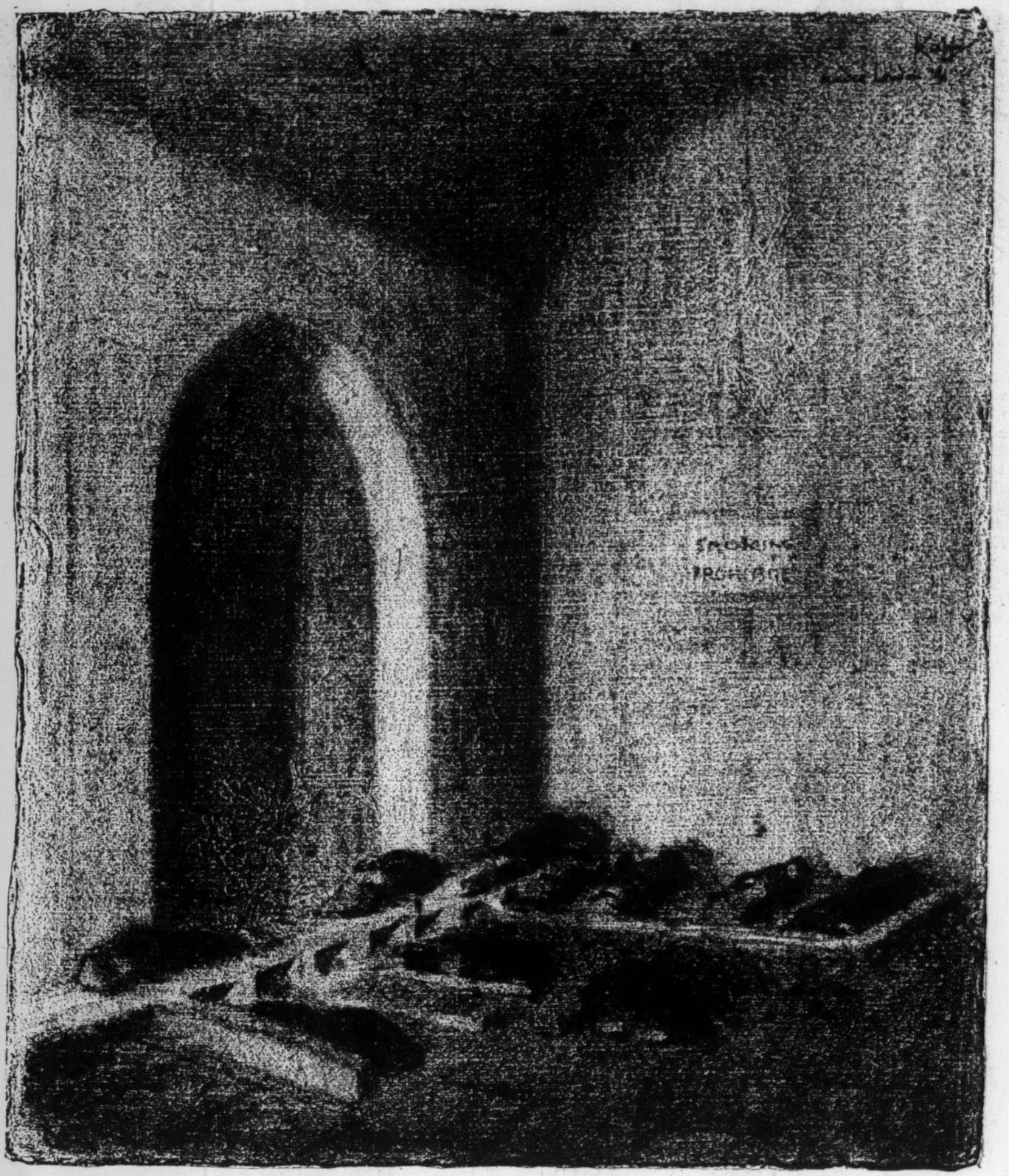
THE drawings reproduced in the Supplement speak for themselves. The artist is already well known to readers of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION by the series of Geneva portraits that were published here in 1935. Edward Kapp was born in London, 1890. He served in the last war at G.H.Q. in France. He first exhibited in 1919, and he has published six books of his drawings. He was recently commissioned by the Ministry of Information to make drawings in London shelters; the illustrations in the Supplement show a few of the thirty resulting works.

The originals of these and other drawings by Kapp will shortly be on exhibition at the National Gallery where war pictures by such artists as Stanley Spencer, John Armstrong, Graham Sutherland, John Piper, Henry Moore, Topolski and Ardizzone are already available to the public. The copyright in them belongs either to the Crown or to the artist.

As we are also publishing this week an article on Shelters, by Mr. Ritchie Calder, it may be well to point out that the Kapp drawings were made before the recent improvement in shelter conditions. They will convey the atmosphere of underground London for those who have never visited it; but they are to be judged as the response of an individual sensibility to a scene that is strange, untidy, pathetic and grim, but not wholly lamentable, since the good humour of the shelter public is as conspicuous as their discomfort. The drawings are in no sense "illustrations"; Kapp's purpose is not to point a moral but to express something that the eye and the mind's eye perceived but forbore to analyse.



A FAMOUS LONDON MISSION GOES UNDERGROUND



Under The Arches—Down-and-outs sheltering.

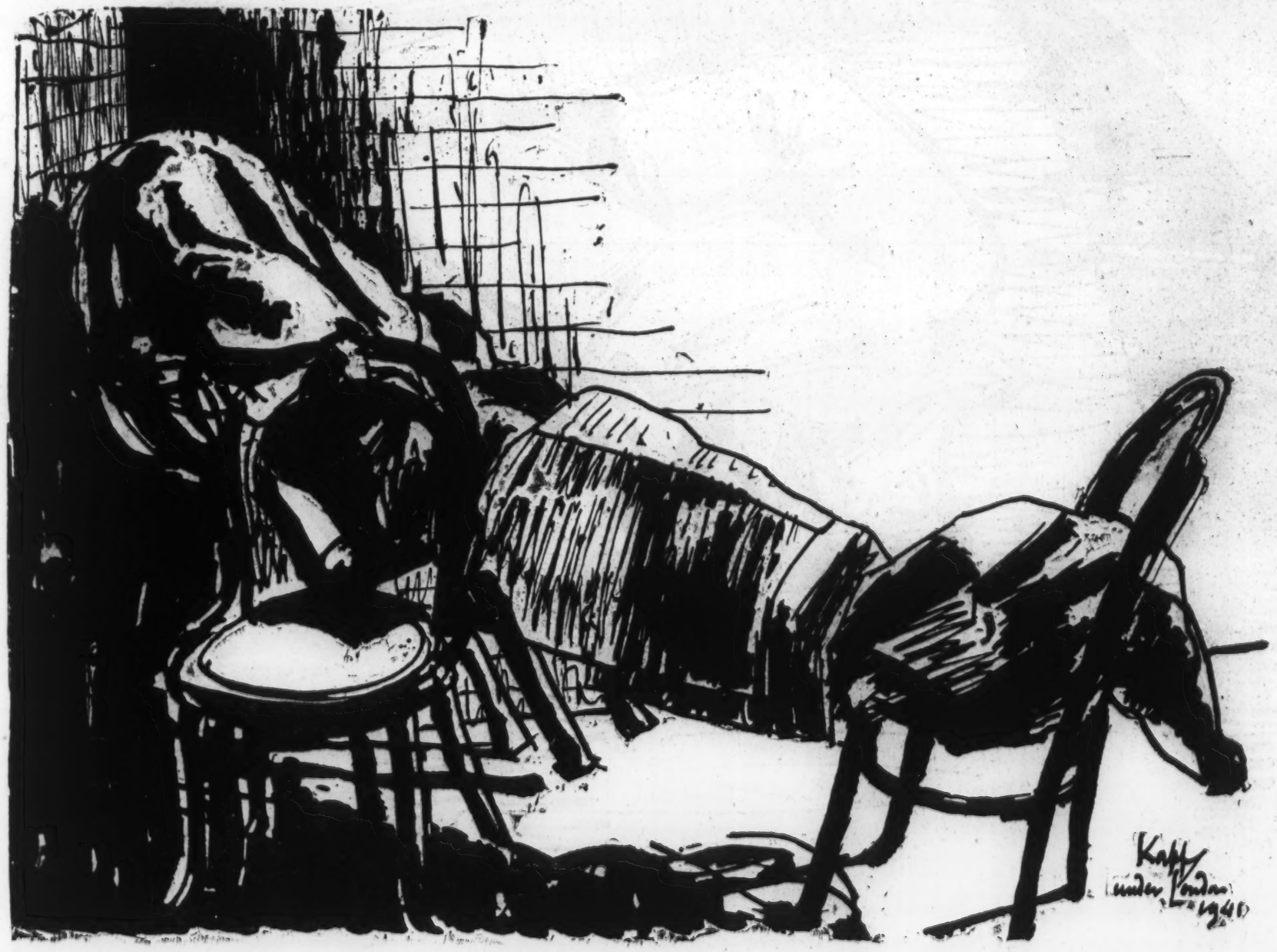
Regulars Under Ground—Ticket Holders on a station platform.

King of The Dossers—Arch 176.

THE END OF THE DAY—Bunks in St. Martin's Crypt.

IN THE CRYPT—Refugee from Gibraltar asleep on a tomb.

IN THE CRYPT—Refugee from Gibraltar asleep on a table.



CORNER RESERVED—Hiding from bombs in calico, brown paper and *The Daily Express*.

Nature's Soft Nurse—Asleep in the Dick Sheppard Vault.

and Exercise cancelled because of alerts, and food can be left to the imagination. The "savage penal laws of the nineteenth century" are back with the wartime prison.

The "St. Paul's bomb disposal heroes" came in whilst I was there. Nine months each for sharing between them fifteen shillings worth of wet cigarettes. There was a fireman too, who had put in his pocket a broken Masonic Badge; hung on to it out of curiosity, to show his pals and his wife; picked it up from weeks' old ruins—and for that he was branded LOOTER—and there was a bit of a boy whose wartime crime was to take chocolate from a glassless window. Surely, as Cicely Craven says, "it is a sin against the community and the individual to send to prison such men." JOHN GRAY

THAILAND

SIR,—In Miss Dorothy Woodman's article I notice the remark "Europeans controlled the capital in the teak and rubber industries and Chinese labour worked them." As former Adviser to the Siamese Forest Department for about three years, and author of the only printed work in existence on the Siamese teak industry—so far as I am aware—I should like to point out that the entire labour force employed in working the Siamese teak forests belonged to the Lao, Khamoo, and other kindred local races. Chinese labour is employed in the Bangkok sawmills. Of course, I have been completely out of touch with the industry for some time past, but I cannot believe that local conditions up country can have changed to any great extent.

As regards the remark occurring towards the end of the article in question that "British policy has consistently suppressed India's millions whilst Dutch policy has drained the Netherlands East Indies for three centuries of most of its wealth," I should like to ask whether this observation is either fair or accurate? D. BOURKE-BORROWES

[Miss Woodman writes: "My source of information on the first point was the *Far Eastern Survey*, the very well-informed fortnightly research service of the American Council of the Institute of Pacific Relations, which in its issue of October 23rd, 1940, states: 'Teak and rubber . . . were shared between Europeans and Chinese, on the general basis of the former supplying the capital and technical direction while the latter furnished the labour and controlled the retailing end.' Since 1939, as I pointed out, the Thai Government has made great efforts to become more self-sufficient, and in doing so has passed a great many restrictive acts against the Chinese. As for the statement about the Dutch draining the Netherlands East Indies of its wealth, it is variously estimated that from one-fifth to one-tenth of the entire population (about 6 millions) of the Netherlands is either directly dependent on, or indirectly interested financially in, the commerce or industries of the Netherlands East Indies (with 60 millions of people). Although actual slavery in Sumatra is now abolished, there are still ways and means of compelling natives to work there. Again, in recent times, in the great sugar slump period it was the Indo-Chinese farmers who bore the brunt, whilst the Dutch capitalists at home lived on their profits. Recent figures (I quote again from the *Far Eastern Survey*, January 17th, 1940) show that the Dutch receive from the Netherlands East Indies an average annual return of about 200 million florins in 'direct gains' and about 120 million florins in 'indirect gains.' Among the former their percentage share in the chief industries is 95 per cent. sugar; 60 per cent. rubber and other agricultural commodities; 100 per cent. loan banks; 90 per cent. tin (private); 40 per cent. oil; 100 per cent. shipping; 95 per cent. railways and trams (private); 100 per cent. public utilities (private). Among the latter are reckoned the salaries of white Dutch: pensions and wages paid in Holland on Dutch exports to Netherlands East Indies and re-exports from Netherlands India to other countries. Surely it is no exaggeration to say that Holland has drained from the East Indies the money earned by native labour."—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

MARX AND MUSIC

SIR,—My attention has been belatedly drawn to a review, in your issue of January 18th, of an article of mine entitled "Marx Invades Music," which appeared in the *Music Review*, Vol. 1, No. 4.

Why the name of Karl Marx makes so many men see red I have never understood. The brain of your reviewer, for instance, was so heavily flushed with blood that he failed to see that the facts that he charges me with omitting in the manner "typical of doctrinaire Marxists," as he says, are plainly stressed.

The odd fact is that everything that he asserts should have been said by me might very easily have been quoted from the body of the article. But I was not content with assertion. I gave reasons and references, too; and I showed that the current ideas of Liberalism so clear in Verdi were also fully evident in the works of contemporary educationalists, poets, novelists and dramatists alike. I am not, by the way, a doctrinaire Marxist.

Where we differ is that he regards all these as having reached out a hand, picked up the ideas and inserted them into their work; while I see them as having absorbed their first notions of actualities from their material environment, the expression of which is made articulate by training and experience.

And I still insist, in spite of your reviewer, that those very ideas, recognised instantaneously by Verdi's fellow-Italians, were responsible for his immense popularity at that time. His popularity to-day is quite another thing just as Puccini's popularity is another thing.

Of course Marxists could develop the same central proposition with regard to Schumann or Schubert. Your reviewer finds some kind of "economic" premises in my essay but it is necessary for me to inform him that economic theories were not even implied. The truth is that there he betrays complete ignorance of Marx: evidently he believes him to have been merely an economist. H. G. SEAR

ALBANIA AND ABYSSINIA

SIR,—Now that Abyssinia and her Emperor have been assured by the Secretary for Foreign Affairs that her freedom and his throne will be re-established by the victories of Britain in Africa, there remain only one people and one country, also victim of the dictators, who have not been mentioned by the responsible statesmen in Britain: Albania and the Albanians. Mr. Churchill has assured the world that all nations, even Austria, will be freed. But concerning Albania not one word.

It is true that last autumn answering Mr. Mander in Parliament, the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Butler, expressed the sympathy of the British Government for the group of Albanians (if there is one) working for the liberation of their country. In the meantime Albania has become the first battlefield where one of the dictators has been defeated; her towns and villages are every day the targets of the R.A.F., Albanian peasants die and nobody thinks it necessary to say anything to encourage these brave people.

What is the reason for this attitude? Is not Albania a victim of unprovoked aggression? If the British Empire intends to re-establish freedom in Europe, why exclude Albania? Is it that Albania is such a small nation and therefore must be treated differently to the others?

As Albania happens to be the first European country attacked by the dictators that is being liberated by the Democratic Allies, it would create a most profound effect on all nations if we proclaim now our resolve to restore the independence of Albania. Would not this be the best propaganda to other enslaved nations and people and a clarion call to revolt? Is there a better answer to Italian propaganda which claims that the Greeks are occupying Albania as conquerors and not as liberators?

The recognition of Albanian independence would be greatly appreciated by the Turks, who still recognise the existence of an Albanian State and an Albanian Embassy in Ankara. All Moslems are particularly interested in the fate of their fellow-Moslems in Albania, who form part of the nation.

At the beginning of the conflict between Greece and Italy General Metaxas declared that they are fighting for the freedom of Albania, but nothing has been said and done about it since. This is having a most disturbing effect among the Albanians and is reflected in the lack of support the Greeks are receiving from the Albanian people in their struggle against the Italians. The attitude of the Albanian people is of prime military importance at this stage of the conflict. During the last two months there have been no such big advances by the Greek troops in Albania as there were at the beginning of the campaign, when the newspapers were full of the deeds of the Albanian irregulars. With the rapid advance of the Greek Army, aided by British support and supplies, all talk of Albanian independence and freedom was dropped. This has not escaped the notice of the Albanian people. Only an official declaration and guarantee from the British Government of the future independence of an Albanian State will re-kindle the enthusiastic support for the democratic cause.

If Abyssinia, another victim of Mussolini, is to regain her independence, why not Albania? The Albanians have not forgotten the secret treaty of 1915 from which they were only saved by President Wilson. Until June 1939 Allied policy towards Italy was of so delicate a character that even the name of Albania was "taboo" within the hearing of Mussolini. When Italy entered the war against us, Albanians hoped their chance for freedom had come, but nothing happened until suddenly Mussolini attacked Greece from Albania and thereby turned the country into the battlefield. Now the Albanians are being bombed and shelled out of house and home by Italians, Greeks and the R.A.F. without any promise of freedom from any side. It must be stated bluntly that the Albanians no more desire Greek domination than Italian rule; they have tasted both and hate both. The Moslems have no pleasant memories of the Greek occupation. In spite of the great deeds of the Greek Army, it is no use blinking the fact that they have now reached a state of stalemate. The Greeks may take Tepeleni, Lin, and even Valona at great sacrifices, but when they reach the Mocra Mountains and the permanent fortifications of Librazdh, they will be up against the toughest proposition in their path.

This Albanian Maginot Line with its great natural strength cannot be stormed by frontal attack. It is only from the rear that this position could be conquered. This is where the Albanian irregulars with their light arms, which they still possess, could and would render priceless service to the Allied cause, if freedom is offered to them as their reward.

On grounds of military necessity and on grounds of practical and political wisdom it is incomprehensible why this policy is not adopted. Was Albania, or part of it, by any chance promised to Greece as an inducement to join the Allied cause? Have the Government at any time consulted with Albanian representatives here or elsewhere how Albanians can assist in our war efforts?

The Albanians can muster an army of 100,000 well-trained warriors, who are prepared to fight to the last man if freedom and independence are their reward. This would bring about the rapid collapse of Italy in Albania and strengthen our whole Balkan campaign. F. L. KERRAN

ARMY EDUCATION

SIR,—Although I am substantially in agreement with Mr. Williams' account of "Education in the Army," he fails to mention one highly important point which, although it may not apply in all the services, is true in my own experience at the R.A.F. Evening classes are, as he says, voluntary, but only initially so; for since a man has entered his name for a course, attendance becomes compulsory, and is enforced as it would be for any other parade.

I do not know whether this is a general state of affairs, or merely a local ruling peculiar to one camp; but it certainly has the effect (as one would imagine) of reducing support for such classes very considerably. J. M.

THE B.B.C. BAN

SIR,—A recent Gallup Poll in America showed a small but disturbing increase in hostility to the Lease and Lend Bill. At this moment the B.B.C. hands a formidable weapon to Isolationist American opinion in the shape of the ultimatum presented to supporters of the People's Convention.

Surely it is absurd to reiterate that we are fighting for freedom when singers, actors and musicians are prevented from broadcasting because they hold opinions differing from those of Broadcasting House? As there is no question of any of these people publicising their views over the radio, we are, apparently following the example of the Japanese in penalising "dangerous thoughts."

It is significant that the American journalist who reported the Convention proceedings for *Picture Post* regarded the very existence of the Convention as a proof that British democracy was still functioning. What will America think now? Perhaps they will conclude that Ambassador Kennedy was right after all—that our democracy is just "the bunk-stuff."

DEMOCRITUS

Current Literature

MRS. THRALE

No one can destroy Boswell's sketch of Mrs. Thrale. It is done with such venom and such vivacity; it contains so much of Boswell himself, and, like all Boswell's portraits, it fits so perfectly into its place in the picture. But Mr. Clifford* has done what is far more valuable and more difficult. He has gone behind Boswell's sketch and beyond it. He has amplified it and solidified it. He has brought Mrs. Thrale herself into the foreground. And by so doing he has changed the proportions of the picture.

Mrs. Thrale herself has lived an ambiguous scattered life all these years in a mass of half published or unpublished documents sprinkled over England and America. And for years Mr. Clifford has been tracking her down and piecing her together with the most devoted care and the most triumphant results. If it were not that her diary and her commonplace book are still in the hands of an American editor, we should suppose that the whole woman is now before us. As it is we know her better perhaps than almost any living person. We can follow her, as we cannot follow our friends, at a foot's pace for more than eighty years. Yet the effect of this minute illumination is baffling. The more we know of people the less we can sum them up. Just as we think to hold the bird in our hands, the bird flits off. Who can explain, for example, why the brilliant and precocious Hester consented to marry the man whom Mr. Clifford now reveals in his entirety—the odious Thrale? When her father discovered their clandestine correspondence he fell dead in a fit. And for once the incompetent, irascible, impecunious Welsh squire was in the right. No marriage could have been more incongruous. Hester was impressionable, generous, intellectual. Thrale was a cold, callous, conventional man of business who aped the habits of the aristocracy but was without their distinction, who had the grossness of the middle class but lacked their geniality. If he had any affection besides his passion for meat and drink it was not for Hester but for her mother. Yet Hester married him and was at once immured in the great house at Streatham, "like a kept mistress," as Johnson said, "shut from the world."

It was her marriage, however, that gave depth to her relationship with Johnson. Had she been happy, she would never have known him as she did. He gave her, of course, the obvious things—stimulus, society, an outlet for her irrepressible curiosity and ambition. But the friendship between the young wife and the old man was based on deeper things. Johnson was not merely a distinguished guest at dinner. He had the run of the house. He and his hostess went together behind the scenes. It was to Johnson that Mrs. Thrale turned when her eyes were red with crying—when Queeney snubbed her; when Mr. Thrale took another mistress; when ruin threatened them; when one after another the children were born, and the children fell ill and died. "What shall I do? What can I do? Has the flattery of my friends made me too proud of my Brains? and must these poor Children suffer for my crime?" she cried out to him in her anguish. He gave her counsel and confidence. In return she gave him a share in the family, a stake in the next generation, and domesticity. It was by "the pump-side in the kitchen garden" at Streatham that Johnson was caught "fusing metals" when Mr. Thrale came back from the city and put out the fire. One anecdote sums up their relationship. Johnson had been more than usually rude to her in company, and some one protested. But Mrs. Thrale passed it off with a smile. "Oh dear good man!" she said. And when the words were repeated to Johnson "he seemed much delighted . . . and repeated in a loud whisper, Oh dear good man!"

Why, then, when Mr. Thrale finally ate himself to death, did a friendship that had been daily rubbed and tried for sixteen years come to an end? Partly, as Mr. Clifford makes plain, because Mrs. Thrale had suppressed a great deal. She had certain individual tastes of her own. One was a romantic passion for the scenery of Wales; another was a genuine love for painting. But when the three of them travelled in Wales, neither Johnson nor Thrale had a word of praise for the landscape; and in Paris she was left to gaze for hours in the galleries alone. Again as a writer—she scribbled incessantly—she was by nature an innovator. "Why, she wondered, should there be one set of words for writing and another for speaking?" She saw no reason why one should not write as one speaks, familiarly, colloquially; and her pages, "crowded with familiar phrases and vulgar idioms," roused the disgust of the conventional. Clearly there were a thousand curiosities and desires dormant in her that the old man could not gratify. So long as she was Thrale's wife and the mistress of Streatham she must suppress them. But when her husband's dead weight was lifted off her, up she sprang. She became again the precocious and impulsive Hester Salusbury. Perhaps marriage had kept her youth green in her—she was only just past forty when she became a widow. And one day before Thrale's death Mrs. Byron had warned her, while Piozzi sang to the harpsichord: "You know, I suppose, that that man is in Love with you?"

"That man" is one of Mr. Clifford's most remarkable reconstructions. To the Streatham circle he was merely "an Italian musick master." When they had said that they had said enough. But in fact he was an Italian gentleman of great charm and cultivation; a composer and performer of merit; and a passionate lover of music. He travelled with a small harpsichord fitted under the seat so that he could play Mozart and Haydn on the roads. They floated on a barge down the Brenta to the strains of his music. Nor was he lacking in the sober virtues. He managed Mrs. Piozzi's tangled money matters admirably, and he ended his days in Wales giving plum puddings to villagers and performing the duties of a country gentleman. Yet at the notion that such a man could marry a brewer's widow, the whole company of distinguished people who had feasted at her table took flight in one flock. Johnson trumpeted his rage. "She has now become a subject for her enemies to exult over, and for her friends, if she has any left, to forget or pity." "Heaven be praised," exclaimed the Queen of the Blues, "that I have no daughters." It was only charity that led her to conclude that Mrs. Thrale was mad. For Johnson there is the excuse that he had lost at one blow Streatham and its peaches and its pork pies and the undivided attention of his lady. The old elephant was jealous, and his rage has at least the dignity of wounded passion. But how are we to explain the conduct of the others? Only perhaps by supposing that it is almost impossible even for genius and learning to swim against the conventions of their time. And while genius and learning come down the stream untouched, the conventions in which they exist soon become obsolete and ridiculous. An Italian music master in the eighteenth century was, we must suppose, equal to a negro to-day. To explain the conduct of the Streatham set we must imagine the attitude of society to-day to a lady of rank who has contracted an alliance with a negro and expects Mayfair to open its doors to her dusky and illegitimate brood.

But the more we excuse the Streatham set, the more we must admire Mrs. Piozzi. Her passion for Piozzi made her for once concentrated and direct. There is a fine ring in her letter to Johnson.

> The birth of my second husband [she told him] is not meaner than that of my first; his sentiments are not meaner; his profession is not meaner . . . till you have changed your opinion of Mr. Piozzi let us converse no more.

With those words she should have vanished down the Brenta to the strains of Mozart. Unfortunately, Mr. Clifford has an inexhaustible supply of those little facts that reduce music to common speech. With Johnson it is plain that Mrs. Thrale had lost her centre. Now there was some screw loose. The whirligig spins faster and faster. She was for ever dipping and sampling, quarrelling and chattering. She was impulsive and impressionable, but she was also obtuse and tactless. Her children found her intolerable. Fanny Burney resented her patronage. She decked her little body in grebe skins and tiger shawls and flaxen wigs and many coloured ribbons. She made a fool of herself with her adopted nephew, and let herself be cheated out of six thousand pounds to buy him a baronetcy. There was a coarseness in her fibre and a commonness in her vision that explain why, as an observer, she was so greatly inferior to Boswell.

Yet the spin of the whirligig has its fascination. Her appetite for life was prodigious. She must have some one to worship. Mrs. Siddons succeeded Dr. Johnson. Mr. Conway succeeded Mrs. Siddons. When there was no hero to entertain, she devoured books. And when the books were read, and the letters written, and the copy books filled, she had out her telescope and scoured the horizon. One day she counted forty-one sails out at sea. Then, turning her telescope to the earth, she discovered Sir John Williams five miles away searching for something in his garden. What could it be? She could not rest until she had sent a servant to ascertain that Sir John was looking for his watch.

At last, at the age of eighty, she led the dance at her birthday party with her nephew; and danced indefatigably till dawn. That was in 1820. By that time one has almost forgotten Boswell's sketch. It was a snapshot at one particular moment. But the moment has long been covered over. She has loved; she has travelled; she has known everybody; she has been in the depths of despair and on the crest of the wave times without counting. The portrait of the old lady in the huge bonnet shows a very modern face, with her great vivacious eyes, her loose lips, and the deep scar over the mouth which, by her own wish, the artist has faithfully depicted. For that was the scar she got when her horse threw her in 1774 at Streatham.

VIRGINIA WOOLF

* *Hester Lynch Piozzi (Mrs. Thrale).* By JAMES L. CLIFFORD. *Oxford Press.* 21s.

NEW NOVELS

The Land of Spices. By KATE O'BRIEN. *Heinemann.* 8s. 6d.

Stupidity's Harvest. By MARY MITCHELL. *Methuen.* 8s.

Temperate Zone. By NANCY JOHNSTONE. *Faber and Faber.* 7s. 6d.

Shadow of Wings. By STELLA MORTON. *Hodder and Stoughton.* 8s. 3d.

Hildreth. By HARLOW ESTES. *Hodder and Stoughton.* 8s. 3d.

A Ghost Walks on the Water. By BARBARA LAUB. *Methuen.* 7s. 6d.

In this twittery, slack, inelegant collection of novels *The Land of Spices* stands out almost as a work of genius; one feels like sending the author a literal bouquet. But it would be easy, by casually overpraising it in such company, to give it both more and less than its due. It is adult without being about politics, serious without being about the war, emotional without being about marriage, malicious without being about Bloomsbury, religious without being

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JONATHAN CAPE

At present

didactic and ordinarily human without being dull. It is well—if anything too well—written, there are rather too many thoughtful words and not enough economy; but what a rich, appreciative literary fault it seems.

The book is about a nun of the *Compagnie de la Sainte Famille*. She is the English Reverend Mother of one of their schools in Ireland. She finds Irish religious politics both complex and silly, she finds the under-the-skin matiness of the Irish nuns a trying, unnegotiable barrier and the whole struggling, rather petty life distasteful to her. She decides to try to resign, but at the last moment she gets interested in a small new girl with a passion for learning poetry, and tears up her letter. The child, Anna Murphy, reminds her of her own enthusiastic but diffident childhood and seems to need her help—finally, Reverend Mother is recalled to Brussels to become the *Mère Générale* of the Order and leaves, at the same time as her *protégé*, after many family squabbles, leaves for college. Intelligently worked into the book, partly through direct information from the author and partly through the recollection of Reverend Mother herself is the life story of Helen Archer both before and after she took the veil. Her mother died when she was young and she was brought up by her father, a dim, scholarly Cambridge figure with a passion for the poets of the seventeenth century. They lived in Brussels and she went to the convent of the *Sainte Famille* to school. At eighteen she accidentally found out something of the private life of her jealously adored father and was so profoundly shocked that she decided to become a member of the Order that had educated her. This part of her story, though depending upon one of those splendid shocks that sheltered girls from Pamela to Lady Windermere have always enjoyed, is still convincing, and its effect upon the combination of pride, jealousy and over-sensitive intellectuality in the girl does seem strong enough to send her flying from the world.

One can have too much of giggling love, hot, misunderstood tears, twitching cubicle curtains, shining parquet and parents on Sunday. But Miss O'Brien does do it very well indeed:

> "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings," said Reverend Mother, knowing that to pronounce the last word was to risk a subterranean crisis of schoolgirl indecency.

Her schoolgirl conversation is a masterpiece of uppishness, insolence, snobbery, priggishness and fumbling honesty; and she manages, on the whole to be compassionate without too much sentiment. There is that familiar yet unaccustomed Catholic background, with its homely vulgarity: "The Grotto smelt of wet geraniums; St. Joseph was dressed in brown, and the stem of the plaster lily in his hand was like green marzipan": its seemly motto "*La Pudeur et la Politesse*": its maddeningly insular priests and its politic bishop. All these would carry any book a long way, but they are given added strength by the astonishingly narrow compass in which they take effect.

Miss O'Brien is really interested only in emotions; in the interplay of feeling between one person and another; or in the explosive atmosphere of an overcharged room. Not at all detached it is still not a physical but a thoroughly mental implication, so that often emotions that are hardly there are given intellectual expression. Poetry, painting, architecture, things, mean nothing to her except in the interpretation of a mood. She hardly looks at all. This means that her atmosphere is brilliant but her world has something lacking. It means that her sensitive, ironic, implacably just heroine, though a fascinating character is quite unsatisfactory as a *réligieuse*. Everything is measured first in the light of her personal reactions. We are told that she was a success as a nun:

> Spiritually by an increasing faith in God, which gave her power to keep her life serenely at His disposal; practically, with professional success, for she became a most intelligent and successful member of the order . . . who will have to struggle with obedience . . . because it is a persistently intellectual sacrifice; it is always an idea. She found only cerebral difficulties in religious life. And this great strength was her weakness.

Helen Archer was an obstinate girl whose intellectual development was far in advance of her emotional development and she was quite incapable of accepting a piece of knowledge without pronouncing judgment on it. Miss O'Brien does not allow her to overcome this initial spiritual pride. She has not encouraged her to make any effort of control that could not be made outside the convent walls. And that is the weakness of the book. Perhaps to do so she would have had to make her a contemplative, and then there would have been no story.

Miss Mitchell had a good idea when she started on *Stupidity's Harvest*. A beautiful but stupid girl, after succession of short-lived flirtations, at last gets a husband—helped by the last war, because much of his engagement time was spent in France. Conscious of her lack of brain and of the fleeting nature of her beauty she grows wildly, possessively jealous, teases her husband into sullen boorishness and her children into a state of nervous exhaustion. She needs such continual assurances of love that her husband has not only to abstain from ordinary politeness to the *chic* French governess (last of a rapid succession), but to prove his single-minded devotion by not agreeing for a moment with his wife's public admiration of the girl. It could have been a most delicately tortured book; a nineteenth-century French masterpiece. But Miss Mitchell has taken no trouble; it is galloped out sentence after clumsy sentence, word after commonplace word:

> She could not bear it any longer, she must go home. If she could understand what was at the bottom of it all, it would be easier, but this sense of groping in the dark, of being the dupe, the victim, and the sport of a situation not of her creating, and no concern of hers was more than she could endure.

And quite right, too. The French are *chic*, the English ill-dressed, and so everywhere Therese, *La belle laide*, is perfectly, deftly, impeccably, quietly, suitably turned out. There is a quite imaginatively turned tragic ending.

Temperate Zone is a lively book about Mexico City and a Mexican Indian village. The rather flimsy plot in which a half-white Indian girl falls petulantly and prettily in love with an American journalist who has already promised to be the second husband of a lovely, bored blonde, is a splendid opportunity for witty comment on Mexican Anglo-American life and on Indian customs—and it is quite witty. There is a lot of "dignity and impudence" stuff when the whites open a hotel in an Indian village, and a lot of shocking superstition; a lot of gay colour and a lot of loose talk, a lot of impassive brown faces and a lot of funny antiques. But it gives a tolerable impression of accuracy, and is good entertainment.

The Manners family should be a great success. *Shadow of Wings* is a nice book about a nice family with a nice, modest, middle-class background and some eccentric, poor, but unmistakably aristocratic Irish aunts. We all had an anxious fortnight in August, 1939, and so did the Manners family, and they, like us, in their decent, honest, good-natured, loving English way are going to do their bit and crush the beast and make England safe for another generation or so of Sunday Dinners.

Hildreth won a big prize in America. It is an untidy American seaside novel about the idiotic emotional blunderings of a nineteen-year-old girl. Bossy, bad-tempered and insensitive except to herself, she seems to have none of the qualifications of a heroine. The mother is a Yankee Miss Bates character, inconsequent, idle, and occasionally funny. It is not worth unravelling, but if you like the complex misunderstandings of a not very highly developed collection of people, you will like *Hildreth*. There is not much American local colour except for a rocker or two, a couple of porches and a chicken salad.

Perhaps least (but there was a good deal of competition for last place) is modern love, free and otherwise, with a technical background of sailing in the Thames estuary: *A Ghost Walks on the Water*.

> The shackle of the riding-light rustled against the forestay. The dinghy bumped, and the heavy washes caused the forehatch to slide. I went up on deck feeling [illegible]

This kind of thing alternates with rather dreary conversations about trial marriage.

MYFANWY PIPER

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CULTURAL CHAOS

The Culture of Cities. By LEWIS MUMFORD. Cheap edition. *Secker and Warburg.* 12s. 6d.

To drive in a car from the country—north, east, south, or west—into the heart of London invariably affects one, however insensitive and obtuse one may be, with depression. It is not merely the blank unmitigated ugliness of this vast wen which fills one with irritation or despair or coma, according to one's temperament; it is the spectacle of something which is at the same time so enormous and hideous and so futile and dead. We are driving not through Megalopolis, but Necropolis, and if one wanted the final proof that there is some malignant disease in the heart of our civilisation, one would point not to war or the unemployed or bombed buildings or the barbarism of Nazidom but to Clapham, Brondesbury, or Edmonton. One's choice of an example, be it noted, is not from two or three suburbs, but from hundreds, and it would not matter which one chose; they are all exactly the same, and necessarily so, for the characteristic of death is that it always reduces the dead, whether men or cities, to sameness; it is the "great leveller," the final destruction of the individual.

In this respect London does not differ at all from the other capitals of Europe except in size, and European capitals do not differ from other European cities and towns except in size. Whether it be France or Italy, Austria or Germany, as soon as one begins to drive through the suburbs into a city, one is in the same place; it may lead to Unter den Linden or the Tuileries or the Forum Romanum, it is the same Necropolis, the same dead and deadly uniformity of mean and dreary streets. And what makes this city of the dead doubly horrible is that it is precisely the place in which the living live. These brick boxes are not the prisons or workshops of the people, but their homes; they reflect the form and colour of the lives they live or hope to live. And they are patently deader than the Forum Romanum or Pompeii which died two thousand years ago.

The man who can diagnose the disease which has produced Clapham, Edmonton, or their French and German equivalents will also have diagnosed the disease which has produced Hitler, Fascism, and the war and which is destroying civilisation in Europe. The chief merit of Mr. Lewis Mumford's *The Culture of Cities*, which was first published three years ago and is now republished in a cheaper edition, is that it is a real contribution to such a diagnosis. The book has considerable faults which are likely to be peculiarly irritating to the intelligent reader. Mr. Mumford's style and vocabulary do not make for clear or precise thinking. He uses too many words and flogs his own and the reader's mind with them as though they were dead horses—and sometimes that is what in consequence they become. He says the same thing too often and at much too great a length, and he is inclined to say it in jargon which is both vague and grandiose. But when one has set off the defects against the merits, there is a large balance on the right side. First, Mr. Mumford has the right equipment for his task, which is analysis of the relation of cities and architecture to culture. He has the wide and detailed specialised knowledge of cities and architecture without which such an analysis would remain continually in the air. He has a wide sweep of historical knowledge and that rare gift of historical imagination which can see what is significant in a welter of "facts" and can, therefore, spot the large effects emerging from the litter of little causes. Finally, he has a passionate interest and curiosity in his subject and a passion for the "good life" and the good city which are civilisation. His knowledge, intelligence, imagination and passion have combined to produce an important book, important because it reveals something of the nature of the disease from which our cities and our civilisation are suffering and even of the cure.

A city reflects and embodies the essence and intention of a civilisation in a peculiarly vital way, for it is created, and each new generation readapts it, as the physical environment in which the living desire to live. It is therefore a visible organ of social values and social purpose. Mr. Mumford begins his book with an analysis of the form of the medieval city from this point of view. The medieval town was a "vital social environment"; it was visibly organic; and its form was impressed upon it by the need for military protection, religion, and a profound sense of corporate life, civic and social. You may or may not approve the social values, intentions, and beliefs of those who built Verona or Segovia, but you have to admit that they are built into the walls and houses and integrated form of those cities, so that after five or six hundred years, when we see them, we can say: "Here was a civilisation, and here is a town built by civilised men to live in and where civilised men can live."

No one could say that of London or Bexhill or Reigate or any town which was built in the nineteenth century. They are, as Mr. Mumford says, simply the crystallisation of chaos. This civic and social chaos which has taken the place of form, order, and civilisation in our material cities is most obvious in the shapeless metropolis, the huge, sprawling megalopolis, the tumours which have grown upon the body of society and of the national state in every country during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But it is equally operative in the smaller tumours, called towns, in which say 20,000 or 200,000, instead of 2,000,000 people are condemned to

Eric Linklater's

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It has taken Linklater nearly four years to complete this book, which tells the story of an active life spent in search of adventure, of a living, and in travel. The book leads all over the world; collected in its pages are unforgettable characters and some very funny stories. But the irony so characteristic of Linklater's style gives but light and grace to the profounder theme of one man's search for a deeper apprehension of life which is really the theme of this memorable book. 12/6

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"The best stories in this volume are those which have been suggested by Miss Buck's own experiences in China, and these are very good indeed. The incidents may be invented, but her invention is securely rooted in a rich mould of knowledge and is fed and watered by a quick and sympathetic imagination."—*Manchester Guardian.* 8/6

MACMILLAN

work and live. What is the root cause of this decivilisation of the contemporary city? If there is one place in which the economic determination of civilisation and barbarism can be clearly traced, it is here. Again and again, when Mr. Mumford attempts to analyse the causes of this diseased degradation of our towns and architecture, and still more when he attempts to find a cure, he is driven back to economics. Our cities are the stark product of the capitalist system. They are the products, not of the desire of an environment in which to live; they are the products of property and profit. In *Crotchet Castle*, which was written in 1831 when modern capitalism was in its first, fresh youth, Mr. Skionar asks: "What is civilisation?" and Mr. MacQuedy, the representative of the new age, answers him: "It is just respect for property." He should have added "and profit." The building of the nineteenth-century city and of the nineteenth-century house or factory was determined not because individuals or the community of individuals wanted to live in them or produce things for consumption in them but because individuals possessed a piece of private property and saw in it the means of making a profit by selling, leasing, or building. Hence city, house and architecture have no shape imposed upon them by any social purpose or desire to live; their lifeless formlessness is imposed upon them by property and profit. Mr. Mumford shows how the rectangular block and the "house" within the block, as a standardised unit for sale or lease, which have formed the basis of the chaotic "development" of our cities, themselves developed as the simplest and most lucrative way in which speculators could sell houses to people who had to live somewhere. The cancerous overgrowth of our great cities and the congestion which accompanies it are due to the same causes. The congestion is uneconomic and would make life intolerable to most of the inhabitants if they had not already, under the corruption of capitalism, lost the art of living.

The road which alone can lead us back from this crystallised chaos to civilisation and civilised cities is known and a movement along it has already begun. It must be based upon decentralisation and the planned region. But no real progress along it is possible unless we can destroy the fundamental economic causes of the existing system and the social values created by them. Take, for instance, urban congestion. Property and profits make congestion a vested interest. As Mr. Mumford says:

> Congestion becomes frozen in the form of a price-pyramid: land rents and mortgages. Any attempt to reorganise the metropolis on rational lines threatens the stability of that pyramid: it would mean a collapse of values in the central area: a deflation of its putative claims on future wealth . . . The whole structure of our present pecuniary values and prestige values assumes the indefinite continuance of this metropolitan pattern.

The moral is obvious and it is the same wherever one attempts to follow the path to sanity out of the existing social chaos, whether it be in international relations or in the building of a house or a city. In the complex society of the twentieth century communal control of property and of power are absolutely essential for the organisation of "the good life," whether of the individual or of society. For the civilisation which is just private property and profit is the civilisation of the slum and the shambles, of the slum in peace and of the shambles when the aeroplanes drop their bombs upon the slum in war.

LEONARD WOOLF

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A MONUMENT

The Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature. Edited by F. W. BATESON. Four Volumes. *Cambridge Press.* £7 7s.

This magnificent work, which Mr. Bateson has most ably edited, bears all the marks which we are accustomed to find in books published by the Cambridge Press—rigid accuracy in dates and matters of fact, extreme thoroughness, and typographical impeccability, this last extending to the exact reproduction of the spelling in the titles of old books. In the three or four thousand closely printed pages it is safe to say that the nicest scrutiny will detect very few errors. I incline to believe that even "Bleinheim, a poem, 1705," is no misprint (Vol. II, p. 325).

The book has been the work of years and, I should judge from a rough glance, of more than a hundred contributors. One or two of these are no longer living, but, living or dead, they bear names that inspire complete confidence.

The first task of the editor—and that no light one—was to decide on his definition of "literature"; it was easy to err either by excess or by defect. He rightly made it as wide as possible. While excluding sheer nonsense, except nonsense of Lear's or Lewis Carroll's kind, he finds room for newspapers, magazines, children's books, and also, what is indispensable for the serious student, treatises or articles, in any language, on English grammar or phraseology. Thus anyone interested in Old English will find here Sievers on metre, Pogatscher on the chronology of the *i*-umlaut, and Prollius on the syntax of Cynewulf, as well as all he can desire to know of the editions of the poets and prose writers. On the other hand, Mr. Bateson has not rejected *The Boys' Own Paper*, Talbot Baines Reed's *Fifth Form at St. Dominic's*, Emma Marshall's tales for girls, or R. M. Ballantyne's adventure stories. The reader will note Shakespeare and Martin Tupper, Puttenham on Poetry and Cavendish on Whist, *Fun* and Hobbes's *Leviathan*, Pope's *Homer* and the schoolboys' "crib"; though—and here one detects the working of Mr. Bateson's definition—there is, unless I am mistaken, no mention of Buckley, the immortal "translator" of Euripides. The principle which has dictated the selection is clearly explained in the preface:

> This is a bibliography of writers who were primarily literary artists. The poets, dramatists, novelists, essayists, and critics have been allowed more elbow-room than all but the very greatest historians, theologians, philosophers, scholars, or scientists. Nevertheless, no type of printed book, from the chapbook to the scientific treatise, from the collection of hymns to the gift-book, has been altogether neglected.

Thus, to take one example in illustration, after mentioning Sir Frederick Pollock's poems, his Spinoza, and his more "literary" law-writings, the entry adds briefly, "Pollock also wrote a number of important works on legal subjects."

The fourth volume contains the Index; for Mr. Bateson agrees with *Punch* that even a dictionary without an index is of little use. Here the reader will find the names of every person mentioned in the three previous volumes, of every periodical, and even of almost every magazine article, with dates added to each. One might venture to claim for this single volume what the editor justly claims for the whole work, that "some of the sections will tell the diligent enquirer more about their subject-matter than the ordinary textbook." For care has been taken that the greater writers do not swamp the lesser. "Minor poets, dramatists, novelists and essayists have generally been allotted respectively a complete list of their poems, plays, novels or collections of essays, together with some, in the case of the less prolific *all*, of their other writings." The thoroughness here is indeed amazing: there must be playwrights mentioned of whom Schelling knew nothing, and whom Mrs. Inchbald does not name, as well as "poets" long since lapped in kindly oblivion. True, there is nothing said of Mr. Thwailes of Durham, who told his "precious sweet forget-me-not" that in winter he would "still preserve it in a pot"; but as a matter of curiosity I looked up William Pattison, "the Sidney College Poet," whose "Abandoned Gown" I happened to have read; and Pattison is there, dates and all.

The second task of the editor was to decide the time-limits of his work. The *terminus a quo* was easy. Unless one takes in inscriptions which are not English at all, one cannot start earlier than 600. For the *terminus ad quem* Mr. Bateson rightly chose the end of the nineteenth century; for the productiveness of the last forty years has been such that to have included them might almost have doubled the size of his book; nor, indeed, can anyone tell what fraction of this vast output will seem to posterity to come within even Mr. Bateson's very liberal conception of what constitutes "literature." Meanwhile, the serious student, for whom the work is designed, has "God's plenty" before him. Should he be interested in Martin Marprelate, here is all he can want; if in the Phalaris controversy he can look up Bentley and Boyle, if, *mirabile dictu*, he must know about the Bangorian dispute, let him turn up the Index for Benjamin Hoadly. If he prefers hymnology, he has here every name worth knowing from Bede to Lyte. One can but envy the ambitious literary researchers of the coming generations who will enjoy the advantages this book provides.

It is a signal misfortune that the work should have had to come out during the war; hence, for some time yet, it will have to wait for its due recognition. Nor, even at the best of times, do editors like Mr. Bateson reap their due reward. Sir William Smith, whose Dictionaries of Biography, Antiquities, and Geography are still valuable, once confessed that nothing but his *Principia Latina* saved him from starvation. At a time like this the authors of this volume are still more likely than Sir William to have to put up with the concurrent coin of thanks. That, however, these public benefactors will receive in rich measure.

E. E. KELLETT

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FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

★

War is the dominant theme of our lives to-day, but farsighted people are thinking of the peace that will follow. Can the world be any more successful this time in laying the basis for a durable peace? To answer this question an understanding of the factors and forces of international relations is now more vital than ever. We must be guided by facts, as far as they are discernible and available, and not by impression.

In this fortnightly review the salient international issues are treated by eminent authorities, and journalists of standing from many countries analyse the political, economic and social aspects of contemporary world affairs.

★

IN EACH ISSUE

the strategical situation is analysed by a competent military authority, HESSELL TILTMAN sends regular dispatches from New York, C. M. FRANZERO, in *Fascism and After* writes on the developments in Italy, while ELIE J. BOIS, in *Men and Affairs in France*, takes us behind the scenes of French politics.

In addition to these regular features, read in the issue of MARCH 7:

H. WICKHAM STEED:
Polish-Czechoslovak Understanding.

JÓZEF LIPSKI:
(Former Polish Ambassador in Berlin)
From Ambassador to Private.

A NEUTRAL DIPLOMAT:
Prospects of Revolution in Germany.

PEREGRINUS:
Stalin's Victory over Communism.

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A LIFE OF JOYCE

James Joyce. By HERBERT GORMAN. *Lane.* 15*s.*

This is a solid book—350 pages—and Mr. Gorman has labelled it "a definitive biography," yet its subject never fully emerges. Why is that? Joyce's detractors would answer that in spite of prodigious literary vitality Joyce is, and will remain, a curiously negative figure. There is some truth in this view. A donnish reserve—though not so impenetrable as in the case of Housman—seems to hold the reader at arm's length; intimacy is barred. A few anecdotes take the place of events, and very soon one learns to fit them into categories—those that display the well-known arrogance, for example, and those that show the family man and the mandarin side by side. As a final disclosure we are offered a Joyce bacchant, in rare moments executing a *pas de seul* after dinner or dancing wildly with postmen through a snowstorm in Rome. These revelations don't add up to a great deal; delectable as Joyciana, they tell us comparatively little about Joyce. He seems (or is made to seem) a subject for pencil sketches; and everyone who met him gives a similar slight portrait, with yachting cap and tennis shoes in the early years, to be replaced later by dark spectacles and the multicoloured slips of *Ulysses*. A meeting, we feel, had been arranged.

Now, this view of Joyce may be exaggerated; but it is a picture that has grown up from a number of sources, and there is nothing in Mr. Gorman's Life to contradict it. Presumably, Mr. Gorman must have known Joyce well, well enough at least to have been chosen as "the biographer" and to have been entrusted with a mass of facts about Joyce's career and family. Yet the atmosphere, almost painfully at times, lacks intimacy. The book seems to have been written (while Joyce was still alive) under a crushing sense of deference. Biographies that have grown out of controversy are apt to be defensive and prickly. Whatever the reason, we discover a more "human" and convincing Joyce in his own *Portrait*, which for many years superseded, one might say, its author's meagre living. At one period the novel, with the title *Stephen Hero*, had reached a length of 150,000 words, with no limits in sight; and this *recherche du temps perdu*, so necessary a refuge from poverty and the present, may well have drained its author. The relation of Joyce to Stephen Dedalus might be compared with Flaubert's attitude to the autobiographical hero of *Education Sentimentale*; each was a return to adolescence; but while Flaubert kept his creation subordinate, Joyce allowed his to thrive at the expense of himself. And when he moved away from the intellectual passion and spiritual crises of youth (he was already middle-aged), it was to undertake *Ulysses*, which battened on him for another seven years. The writing of *Ulysses* (1914-21) covered a period of exile and poverty in various Continental cities, and the single absorption of its writer makes even the war seem incidental. If ever a book obsessed a writer to the exclusion of everything else that book was *Ulysses*. Time stood still while legend piled up round an August day in 1904; Trieste, Paris, Rome seem to have left little impression on Joyce while he relived his Dublin streets. A number of impulses could be hazarded to account for this mountainous preoccupation; strongest, perhaps, the desire to supplant by literature places and people that had haunted him since childhood. Thus, Mr. Gorman puts a good deal of rather aimless local colour into his biography in order to convey the surroundings in which Joyce wrote; but, having done so, makes it plain that *where* Joyce wrote was immeasurably less important than what he was writing.

James Joyce is a disappointing book for several reasons. One, as I have suggested, is the intractable nature of Joyce himself. Another is that Mr. Gorman, despite the "definitive" of his title, does not seem to have been on intimate terms with Joyce, or at any rate lacks the power to convey intimacy. A third reason is that while much of his book is concerned with censorship, and a new battle of the books, Mr. Gorman carefully avoids making any criticism of Joyce's works except in vague terms of approval. The result is a book that evades nearly all the issues (from a critical point of view), and documents a number of things associated with Joyce while throwing little light on Joyce himself. One recognises the difficulties, but more use might have been made of such clues as offered. Italo Svevo, for example, is mentioned by Mr. Gorman as one of the "originals" of Mr. Bloom: that was worth following up, because Svevo is an interesting author of whom we should like to know more. An investigation into Joyce's friendship with the Italian writer in Trieste would surely have produced something more to the point than the tourist's background with which Mr. Gorman follows Joyce's movement round Europe. Mr. Frank Budgen's *James Joyce and the Making of Ulysses*, less critical than its title, gave a charming picture of Trieste interspersed with flashes of Dublin, and warmed to its subject more than any piece of Joyce memoirs I have read.

However, we must be grateful to Mr. Gorman for his industry in unearthing documents. Some private satirical verses (not very striking); a long correspondence between Joyce and Grant Richards over *Dubliners*, written on Joyce's side with careful finality; a few quotations from a *sottisier* of English Letters, which seems to have been more meticulous than amusing; a full history of the publication of both *Dubliners* and *Ulysses;* a few sources and predilections in reading not mentioned before (among these one notes Ben Jonson and Gerhart Hauptmann). But as a whole *James Joyce* falls badly between two stools. It is neither critical nor sensitive enough to please those who understand what Joyce was getting at; and to the more general reader it will too often seem merely adulatory and grey.

G. W. STONIER

TIME, GENTLEMEN, PLEASE

Bunch. By JOHN PADDY CARSTAIRS. *Hurst and Blackett.* 15*s.*

Rich in Range. By CAPT. G. MAROCHETTI. *Hutchinson.* 18*s.*

Inquest. By S. INGLEBY ODDIE. *Hutchinson.* 16*s.*

Bid Time Return. By MARGARET FERGUSON. *Robert Hale.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Easy Going. By REX TREMLETT. *Herbert Jenkins.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

What makes people continue to publish memoirs in times like these? The desire to finish one's story before the Blitz, and closing-time, perhaps. All but one of these books touch on the war in their closing chapters—none have anything to tell us about it. Books about Nelson Keys or the Coroner for Central London I would read with pleasure at any time. These have only to hold our attention—the others must win it. Yet Captain Marochetti and Mr. Tremlett, both travellers and men of action, maintain an astonishing indifference—silence at least—regarding most events of world-wide importance since 1918.

Theatrical biographies are not easy to write well. There is a mass of trivia to be sifted for a few grains of illumination. Mr. Carstairs starts by assuming that a book by *Bunch* must be more interesting than a book about him. "Wherever I could reminisce or become anecdotal, I have done so," he writes, and he certainly ventures few judgments. True this is difficult with an artist who relied so little on established forms, so much on improvisation and idiosyncrasy. The building up of his characters, his treatment of authors' material, comparing his methods with other revue actors—all these are touched on in but the sketchiest manner. Instead we are given a wealth of intimate detail, such as his allowing two teeth to be extracted for a single make-up. To describe his art at all needs very careful thinking, not phrases such as ". . . the deft little man with the daintiness of gossamer." Eliot writing of Marie Lloyd's death in 1923 complained: "The revue, in England at least, expresses almost nothing." Keys brought the revue to life—almost gave it a life to express. This book is a loyal and well-intentioned tribute, but I hope that the subtlest if not the richest comedian I have ever seen will receive something more.

Mr. Oddie's book is written by a man who loves his profession. He studied law and medicine with the express object of becoming a London Coroner. He had something of De Quincey's passion for murder considered as one of the fine arts, and was among the founders of "Our Society." This included Churton Collins, Conan Doyle, H. B. Irving, and others who combined an interest in murder cases with their own calling.

His style is completely unvarnished, unequivocal: he has that shrewd grasp of minutiæ which Wilkie Collins displays with his lawyer-characters in his long leisurely weavings of plot. Mr. Oddie however refrains scrupulously from dramatising his accounts. He is conscientious to a degree in sparing feelings. So that the tone and pace of his narratives never rise or fall a fraction. This method succeeds admirably on the whole: the mere record of events and dialogue is often enough to make its effect. Two examples:

> "Well I'm sugared," declared Brinkley, when charged (with murder). "This is very awkward isn't it?"

or

> Someone sent (to Chief-Inspector Wensley) a glass tumbler, on the bottom of which . . . was an engraved representation of two men hanging from a scaffold, with an inscription underneath, "The Last Drop."

Humane in his procedure, Mr. Oddie condemns "those grandmotherly molly-coddlers" who would reform the English prison system. "As for the modern prison itself, it is almost a home from home nowadays." It is curious that with his immense experience, he has so little to say of the psychological effects of imprisonment or the relation of crime and social conditions, but blandly dismisses English prisoners as "far more comfortable than any in the world." Still Mr. Oddie usually writes well within himself. The photographs are memorable—especially Dr. Crippen's arrest as seen by *Le Petit Journal*.

Those decorating *Rich in Range*, however, might go better with Beachcomber's memoirs of Lady Cabstanleigh. The author regrets, that while it is impossible to say much of any one of his friends, it is equally impossible to mention all of them. Why then write? For some of the worst passages of this book read like mere collective bread-and-butter letters for past week-ends. But the answer isn't so simple. There are two extremes of successful autobiography, one mainly egocentric (say, Forrest Reid's *Apostate*), where the author's friends are shadows of himself; the other like the Count de Grammont's memoirs, where the author living genuinely in the lives of those around him, transfers a personal significance to his circle.

Captain Marochetti has obviously led an unusually full life with vast opportunities for

observation—on political missions in post-war Vienna and 1922 Italy, administrator in Madagascar, journalist in New York. His judgments are often unconventional and emphatic. "Benes, perhaps the only great statesman in Paris (1919) . . . selfish and unscrupulous." "Simplicity in private life is very easy. Communal simplicity is not (on British Olympic athletes, 1924)." There is also a brilliant comparison between English and French Colonies. But neither his work nor his theories are ever before us for long: social acknowledgments always interrupt. The writer's desk is buried under old faintly perfumed *carnets de bal*.

His dislikes—the Arts Club Ball, the middle class, middle-aged and middle-sexed on the Riviera—are always well expressed. His likes apparently exist in their own right. I could not discover a single private emotion in the whole book. This vast gallery of friends live in it, when they do, merely on visiting cards. He suggests charmingly as an alternative title, *God, what a lot*.

Miss Ferguson has an incomparably more vivid power of description, and she knows her limitations. She chooses a brief period, but one of great significance to her imagination, and this holds the book together. It is a pleasant nostalgic account of an exciting childhood in Persia during the Great War. This offers no very profound reflections but some remarkably convincing scene-painting.

> There is a curious nastiness hanging about the beaches of the Persian Gulf, that repels even children from paddling and castle-building. The water is oily, and the sand a greyish white, like the underside of a fish.

One could wish for a fuller portrait of Wassmuss who is painted unrelievedly as the Big Bad Wolf. Still the Persian landscape, its flowers and fruits and soft colours, are firmly and beautifully represented.

Mr. Tremlett is described by Major Yeats Brown as possessing the mind of a man whose muscles are hard, and whose voice carries half a mile. *Voilá tout*. His style is downright, there are some good yarns, and not very subtle practical jokes. His publishers say his inside knowledge of Germany is impressive—you'd never guess it from this book. However, he fights the great strike in Johannesburg in 1922 and in London in 1926 without question. If you can elevate Percy F. Westerman and "living dangerously" into a philosophy, you may like this. But I don't guarantee it.

IAN SCOTT-KILVERT

A DISAPPOINTMENT

Why France Fell. By ANDRÉ MAUROIS. Translated by DENVER LINDLEY. *John Lane*. 5s.

After the capitulation the French blamed the English, and the English blamed the French—a stone-throwing contest between two peoples both of whom lived in glass houses. To-day the English are more popular in France than at any other time in history. Our sufferings have touched their hearts; and their brains tell them that the future of France depends upon the defeat of Germany. The improvement in English feeling has hitherto been less marked. Whereas Mr. Churchill and Mr. Duff Cooper have spoken of the French in most generous terms, Marshal Pétain and Weygand have indulged in reproaches, and Laval in squalid insults. Fortunately for the future of Europe there was one man, General de Gaulle, who in our darkest hour appealed to his countrymen, and many thousands of Frenchmen have chosen to continue the struggle at our side, leaving their families and forfeiting their citizenship.

M. Maurois is better equipped than any other French writer for reviving our old feelings for his country. He has many personal friends here as well as a large public. He was in London at the time of the capitulation, and then went to the United States. By testifying there on our behalf, by writing a book about the Free French forces, about the ever-growing resistance in France, and about the fight we English are making with our allies for the future of liberty, he could have excited deep sympathy here for his country. But the book that he has written will, I fear, serve only to deepen the rift. We cannot reproach ourselves enough for our past blindness and lethargy: if he really thought it opportune, M. Maurois could have drawn up an indictment that would be all the more effective for being strictly fair. I will not catalogue what I consider to be his injustices towards ourselves—the less we think about them the better—but I must place a word about his treatment of his own countrymen. He has harsh words for Daladier and Gamelin and even Reynaud, but Bonnet seems to excite his approval, Bonnet whose claim to statesmanship is based merely on a talent for mendacity. There is not a syllable in condemnation of Laval, not a syllable in praise of Mandel—the one politician in whom the flame of Clémenceau still was ardent. General de Gaulle he dismisses as "the great expert on tanks" whose plans "created a distressing question of conscience for many Frenchmen":

> Some believed the thing to do, first of all, in the hour of our country's agony was to *maintain the unity of France*; others refused to recognise the Armistice and joined General de Gaulle.

M. Maurois's reason for having given his allegiance to Vichy is no doubt in the words that he has italicised. But the unity of France had ceased to exist: it was lack of unity that chiefly caused the collapse—and, afterwards, how could there be unity between a Laval and a patriotic Frenchman? Moreover, M. Maurois must know as well as anybody the importance for his country of public feeling in England and America. Does he not realise how black the future of relations between the French and the English-speaking world would be, if there were no Frenchmen still fighting at the side of the Poles, the Czechs, the Dutch, the Belgians, the Norwegians and the Greeks? Fortunately the heart of France is proving sounder and more courageous than this book would suggest.

If it were not for the passages that must exasperate the English reader, I should like to recommend M. Maurois's book. He is enlightening when he shows how the first eight months of the war were wasted by the Allies; he has some telling anecdotes about Daladier and Reynaud; and his final chapter, touching the faults of the French political *régime*, is well worth the attention of those concerned with France, for it probably represents the opinions of the majority of thoughtful Frenchmen. The more fervently one believes in the superiority of democracy, the more important it becomes to recognise the diseases to which it is liable. Here are the remedies suggested by M. Maurois:

To be strong. A nation that is not ready to die for its liberties will lose them.

To act quickly. Ten thousand aeroplanes built in time are better than fifty thousand after the battle.

To direct opinion. A leader shows the way; he does not follow.

To preserve a united country. Political parties are passengers aboard the same ship; if they wreck it, all will perish.

To protect public opinion against the influences of foreign Governments. To defend ideas is legitimate; to accept money from abroad for defending them is a crime.

To punish immediately and severely any illegal violence. Incitement to illegal violence is a crime.

To protect youth against teaching calculated to weaken the unity of the country. A State that does not try to preserve itself commits suicide.

To demand that those who govern lead upright lives. Vice of any kind gives a foothold to the enemy.

To believe passionately in the ideas and in the way of life for which you are fighting. It is faith that creates armies and even arms. Liberty deserves to be served with more than tyranny.

Some of these prescriptions are unpalatable. But by neglect of them, the Third Republic met its death.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

EXPLORER—ARTIST

Thomas Baines, Artist and Explorer, 1820-1875. By J. P. R. WALLIS. *Cape*. 12s. 6d.

Thomas Baines is, I imagine, practically unknown to the general public. He was not a great man, but of some importance as an explorer, and in the opening up of Africa. He went from Norfolk to the Cape in the eighteen-forties, when the government was encouraging emigration. In 1850-1853 he was with the English forces as artist during the Kaffir wars. Between 1855 and 1857 he explored Northern Australia. In 1858 he went with Livingstone to the Zambesi and later on his own to the Victoria Falls. His last adventure was in Matabeleland where he tried to get a concession from Lobengula to search for gold. He failed in this and died in Durban in 1875.

These are dry bones: but Mr. Wallis has clothed them with interesting detail, whose minuteness, the result of much original research, was essential in such a biography as this. Baines was an atom in the Victorian outburst of exploring energy, but what an active atom he was. He could ride and shoot; knew the use of compass and sextant, was versed in bushcraft, a skilled cartographer. His pictorial output was enormous. He drew the frilled chlamydosaurus in Australia, the awesome chasms of the Victoria

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Falls and Lobengula, *en famille*, sated with pumpkin porridge, his wives lolling at his feet. Not even the industry of Mr. Wallis can attempt a catalogue *raisonné* of his innumerable paintings and illustrations, many of the latter still being sepultured in woodcut in the *Illustrated London News*. In addition he was a copious diarist and ready at any moment to start a paper to amuse his companions, like the *Blue-Jacket Journal* in which he figured under the nom de plume of "Timothy Touchemoff." The industry of the man was amazing, especially as he was constantly on the move and meeting all sorts of hardships and dangers meanwhile.

As an explorer he is overshadowed by Livingstone and one of the most curious parts of the narrative concerns the relations between the two on the Zambesi expedition. Livingstone is represented as an indecisive, inefficient, petty, spiteful man who could handle the blacks but not those of his own colour. The small vexations of a fever-ridden party loomed large. Livingstone said Baines had given away some of the stores. Baines said that if he had done so he must have been delirious with fever at the time. Then Livingstone added to the charge. He accused Baines of "skylarking" with the Portuguese and wasting the expedition's time by painting their portraits. He was no good at store-keeping and Livingstone would not even allow him credit in his art. "You have not got their true colours, nor in the drawings I have seen is the native countenance depicted except by the exaggeration of certain features." The letter containing the accusation, which Mr. Wallis quotes, is not that of a normal man. The theft or loss of stores seems to have been some sugar and jars of butter. But Baines was isolated in a whale boat and "I do not allow him to come to our table but send him a good share of all we eat ourselves." The Doctor also recorded in his diary that Baines and another had joined in the "orgies" of the Tete natives. Trivial or not it was all difficult to disprove. Baines struggled for years to disprove it or live it down. The question came before Lord John Russell and the Attorney General, but while many were sympathetic no one seemed to know exactly how to put it right.

As an artist Baines did the things, well enough, which would now be done by photography. The natives are as an Englishman would see them in 1860—great exhibition natives. The Victoria Falls become an early English water-colour through a distorting glass. But he was one of the first to believe that it was better to make a record of an animal than to shoot it and he was intelligent enough to copy the Bushman paintings (though he did not care much for them). On the whole, as Mr. Wallis observes, his life was a success because he enjoyed it and used all his modest talents to the full. As adventure alone the book is worth while and the collotype plates from Baines' pictures are excellent.

W. GAUNT

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Week-end Competitions

No. 579

Set by Hugh Kingsmill.

We offer the usual prizes for *Chestnuts Re-roasted*. As an example, there is the story of the man who visited a doctor about his melancholia. The doctor told him to go and see Grimaldi, and he replied "I am Grimaldi." Re-roasted, this story might end "I have just seen him."

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, March 17th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 576

Set by G. W. Stonier

We offer the usual prizes for the best letter (not more than 250 words) written home by a Londoner who has gone into the country for a few days' quiet.

Report by G. W. Stonier

A few—a very few—of these letters home reveal that their writers have found the idyll they were in search of; for most it is too quiet or noisy in the wrong way.

Mad sextons get up at night to ring the bells; motor-bike units scorch across gardens; furious talkers vie with non-stop knitters; one crater spreads ripples over a whole county. It's laid on pretty thick, the country after Ardizzone rather than Duncan Grant.

There was a good touch in K. M. Roach's picture of new village life:

> The villagers ask, "Was it bad where you came from?" Sympathetic they are, too, till I tell them my house is still standing. You don't count unless you've been dug out of the debris.

Most competitors were lively at moments, but the catalogue of discomforts tended to drag. Comparatively few managed to make their letters read like letters.

M. Cassel and Sir Robert Witt were easily the best, one with a most convincing evacuee letter (the handwriting unfortunately cannot be reproduced), and the other ambling delightfully through village talk. I find it difficult to choose between them and suggest a first prize of two guineas be equally divided.

PRIZES

I

DEAR MADAM,

Just to say I arrived safe and thanking you for arranging this. The lady wants me to stay more than a week but after all the bombs what have fallen near you never know how soon it will happen next and it worries me about the furnature if I am not there when it happens. They hav'nt had no raids here not since it started at nights they just go to bed. The first night I couldn't go to sleep it seemed funny to be in bed. They hav all the eggs and butter here they want but meat is like us. The vilage is very quiet. Well I must close.

I remain, Yours obedently,
Mrs. Brown. (M. CASSEL)

II

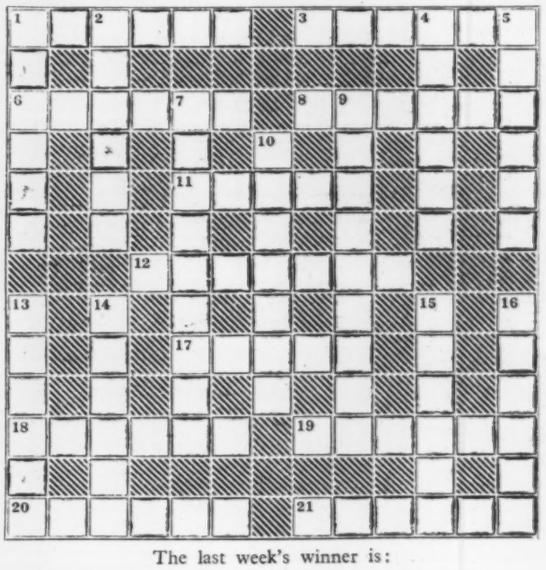
DEAR SISTER,

You assured me I should never find my much-needed quiet in the country, and that with this old war on it would be like London, only worse. You were delightfully wrong.

I chose "Sussex by the Sea," "Silly Sussex," and found this perfect "Sleepy Hollow," in the heart of the Downs. It has a church, a "pub," in which I repose, and a shop or two. The rest is silence—almost. You wouldn't know we were at war but for one fellow who curses the higher price when he orders his pint. As for uniforms, I glimpsed one Boy Scout—on his lawful occasions. A car containing a youth and a girl stopped for a drink, but they wore "civies." So you couldn't tell. I passed the old sexton digging a grave. There were so few tombstones that I remarked, "Folk don't seem to die often in this village." He answered, "No—only once." I asked him if he had lived there all his life. "Not yet," he replied. I said no more. Nor did he. Coming away, I met the parson—nothing of the "Padre" about him. I opened with, "Any news?" "Yes, indeed," he rejoined, "we'll have trouble in the village if the Parish Council won't deal with that odoriferous cesspool." Was I, perhaps, from London? he continued. "If so, is it true that the British Museum is arranging to give back the Elgin Marbles to their rightful owners?"

(SIR ROBERT WITT)

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 22 *Set by* V. S.



The last week's winner is:

Mrs. Rintoul, 2 House o' Hill Gardens, Edinburgh, 4.

ACROSS

1. The whale wouldn't reveal a blooming thing. (6)
3. Antacid? (6)
6. Father's culinary experiment. (6)
8. Bit over poetic about it, by the way. (6)
11. 14 vendors cry as they parcel out? (5)
12. Apartment X. (7)
17. There's nothing to smile about. (5)
18. Bathroom Fittings, 1d., Best Make. (6)
19. Stretch of wet road. (6)
20. Horse out l.b.w. but only as a deputy. (6)
21. About Greece, no doubt. (6)

DOWN—

1. Extra Big Game Hunter's Quarry. (6)
2. Take care of the lettuce plant. (6)
4. No miss, neither did it turn up under the rug. (6)
5. Dog collared his dinner? (6)
7. It is noble to be in the right (4 & 5)
9. Might secure you more if your 2 oz. only got bolted (6 hyphen 3)
10. He is too much over-weight, of course. (7)
13. She is killed by his brother. (6)
14. An iron in the fire? (3 & 3)
15. What Hitler expects to make happen. (6)
16. Poke about the Hotel Regent. (6)

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

Books to the value of Five Shillings may be chosen by the sender of the first correct solution opened. Post solutions to arrive not later than first delivery Wednesday following the date of issue, addressed to "CROSSWORDS," "NEW STATESMAN AND NATION," 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By URBANUS

CONCENTRATING, BUT NOT SOCIALISING, PRODUCTION SAFEGUARDS REQUIRED—STOCK EXCHANGE WAR

PONDERING the Board of Trade scheme for the concentration of production, which was announced by Mr. Oliver Lyttelton to a startled House of Commons on Tuesday, I wondered why it had not been put forward a year ago. Do the rights of private money-making die more slowly in time of war than the right to live? If the home trade has to be limited, as it must in time of war, to percentages as low as 25 per cent. or 33⅓ per cent. of the normal in a wide range of personal and household goods, it is criminal waste to allow each trade to run each of its factories at 25 per cent. or 33⅓ per cent. of capacity, as the case may be. Yet this evil part-time or "spread-over" system has been tolerated for twelve months. At long last, in order to free skilled managers and workpeople for the munition industries as well as factory space for Government storage, Mr. Oliver Lyttelton has won Cabinet approval for the policy of concentrating the remaining production of civilian goods in a reduced number of factories working full-time. It is the only sane economic policy for total warfare. And the Government is right in refusing to contemplate compensation out of public funds for the redundant factories closed down.

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But Mr. Lyttelton's scheme will require many safeguards if it is not to play into the hands of big business. In the first place, the Government is leaving it to the industries themselves to work out their own concentration. What guarantee will there be that production will be concentrated in the most efficient and economic plants? This is not met by the provision that representatives of labour have to be consulted by the Board of Trade as well as those of the employers in deciding the degree of concentration to be achieved. It still leaves it open to the big and rich corporations to bribe their smaller and weaker competitors into closing down. In the second place, the Government contemplate compensation being paid in some form by the chosen nucleus plants to the factories closed down. Out of what? Out of the Excess Profits Tax or out of nothing but an increase in price passed on to the consumer? In the third place, the Government seem ready to protect the concentrated industries so that after the war newcomers do not buy up surplus stocks and upset the re-establishment of the factories now closed down. But is new enterprise to be ruled out? I am sure these safeguards will be in the mind of the Board of Trade officials who will be protecting the national interest when it comes to the trade conferences with the employers and labour to settle the degree of concentration. Mr. Oliver Lyttelton is to be congratulated on having pushed through within the few months he has held office a vitally important scheme which other ministers seemed to have funked.

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From a Stock Exchange point of view the scheme emphasises the point of my advice last week—that investors should forget about their equity shares for the rest of the war. Concentration of production makes it all the more impossible to value one equity share as against another. The firms which will form the nucleus of the concentration will not be able to gather in more profit because Excess Profit Tax will absorb the extra. The firms closed down may receive sufficient compensation from those manufacturing their product on their behalf to build up a useful reserve for re-establishment after the war. Taken as a whole the efficiency of an industry restricted in its home trade will obviously be greater under the scheme of concentration than under the old part-time or "spread-over" system, but it is impossible to forecast the incidence of this greater profitability as between one company and another. The equity share outlook has become all the more confused. And if this scheme of concentration can be put forward for production, why should it not also be carried out in distribution? Another upsetting question.

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War has broken out between the London Stock Exchange and the country broker-jobbers. The Stock Exchange, in addition to its proposals for reducing commissions to agents (33⅓ per cent. to banks and 25 per cent. to others) has instructed its members that they must not "job" with country brokers except in stocks with a local market. The big firm of country brokers, who became also extensive jobbers, namely Nicholsons of Sheffield, have circularised country brokers in protest. The pity of this war is that the investing public will suffer some loss of marketability. The existence of Nicholsons, whether or no they jobbed on the London market's back, made for greater marketability and keener prices in a large number of stocks and shares. With the Board of Trade now licensing and controlling practically the whole of the home trade, is it not time to consider licensing jobbers and bankers and bringing all privately-operated (and sometimes anti-socially operated) Stock Exchanges under public control? The Committee of the London Stock Exchange, which has no charter from the Government, would be wise not to carry a private war with its competitors too far.

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